

Discrete Algebraic Structures

WiSe 2025/2026

Prof. Dr. Antoine Wiehe
Research Group for Theoretical Computer Science



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Register on **TUNE**
- Also register for the **Studienleistung** if not done already (and if you can)
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A $A \cap (B \cup C) = A \cup (B \cap C)$ **-1.67 Punkte**

B $A \setminus (A \setminus B) = A \cap B$ **-1.67 Punkte**

C $A \cap (B \cup C) = (A \cup B) \cap (A \cup C)$ **-1.67 Punkte**

D $\emptyset \in A$ **1.67 Punkte**

E $A \setminus (B \setminus C) = C \setminus B$ **1.67 Punkte**

F $\emptyset \subseteq A$ **0.00 Punkte**

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Strategy to not fail:

- Focus on Part 1: enough points to get a 2.0-2.3 if done perfectly
- Part 2 only for those of you who hope to get 1.x
Do not attempt if you are not confident with writing proofs (points are not easy to get)

- Countable sets, uncountable sets
- Countable sets = what can be represented exactly on a computer
- Combinatorial proofs as a way to prove equalities/inequalities about numbers using functions

$$\text{Injection } A \rightarrow B \iff |A| \leq |B|$$

$$\text{Surjection } A \rightarrow B \iff |A| \geq |B|$$

$$\text{Bijection } A \rightarrow B \iff |A| = |B|$$

- Drawing a tuple/(multi)set with/without replacement

n = size of the set we are drawing from

k = number of draws

	Order matters	Order does not matter
Replacement	n^k	$\binom{n+k-1}{n-1}$
No replacement	n^k	$\frac{n!}{k!(n-k)!}$

3 “advanced” proof techniques for counting:

- Double counting
- The inclusion-exclusion principle
- Application: counting partitions and **surjective** functions
- The **pigeonhole principle** and **Ramsey’s theorem**

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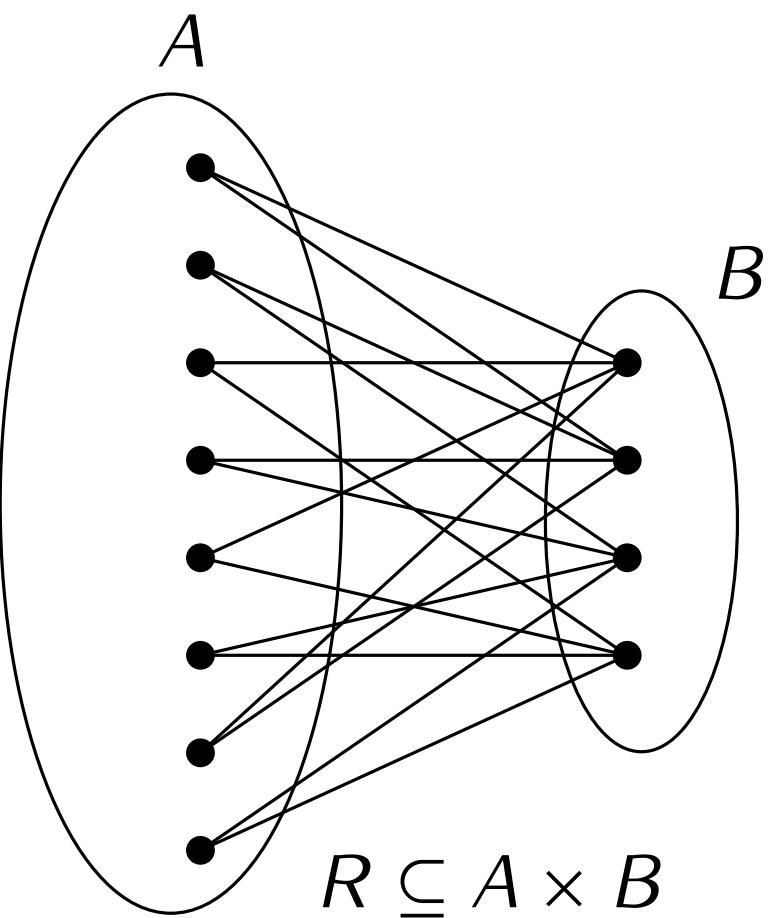
Talk about **asymptotic growth** of counting functions

Idea:

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- what can we do with **relations** instead of functions?

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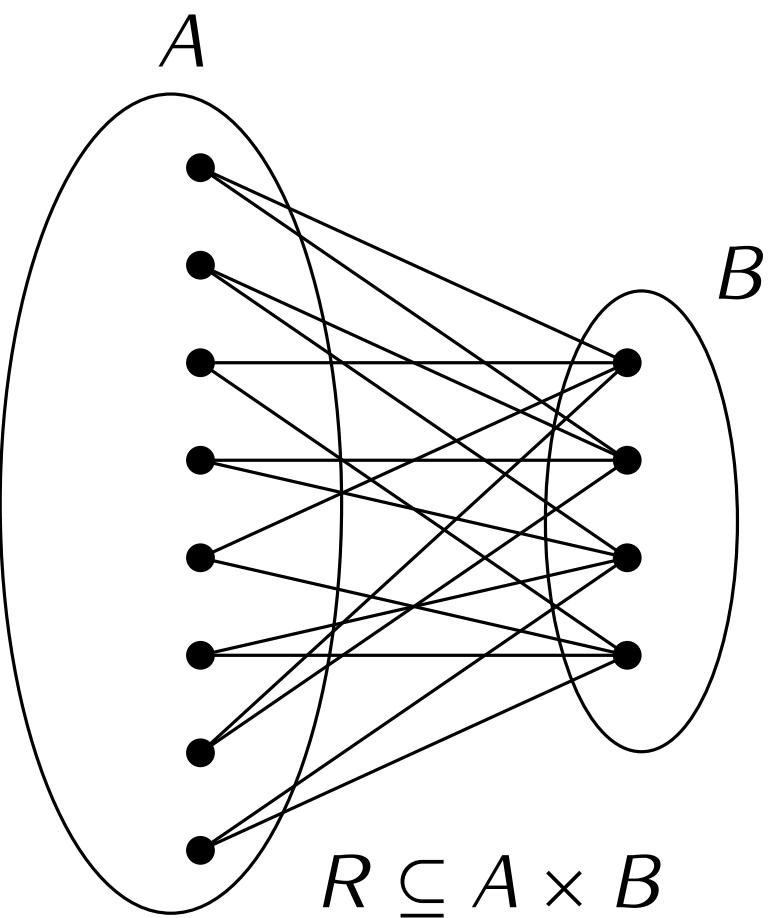


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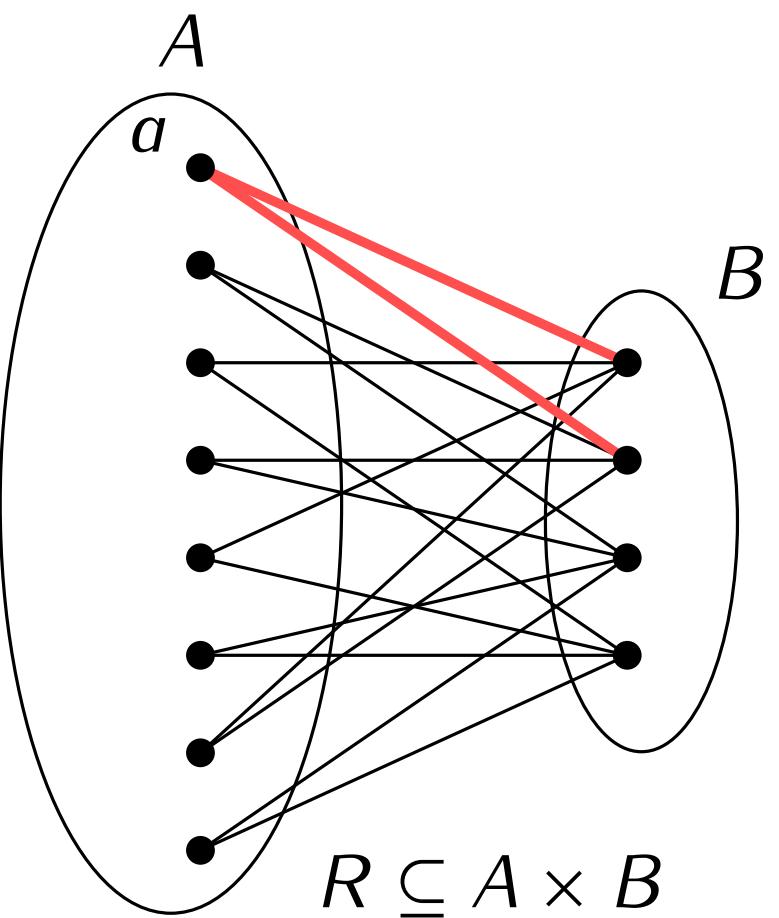


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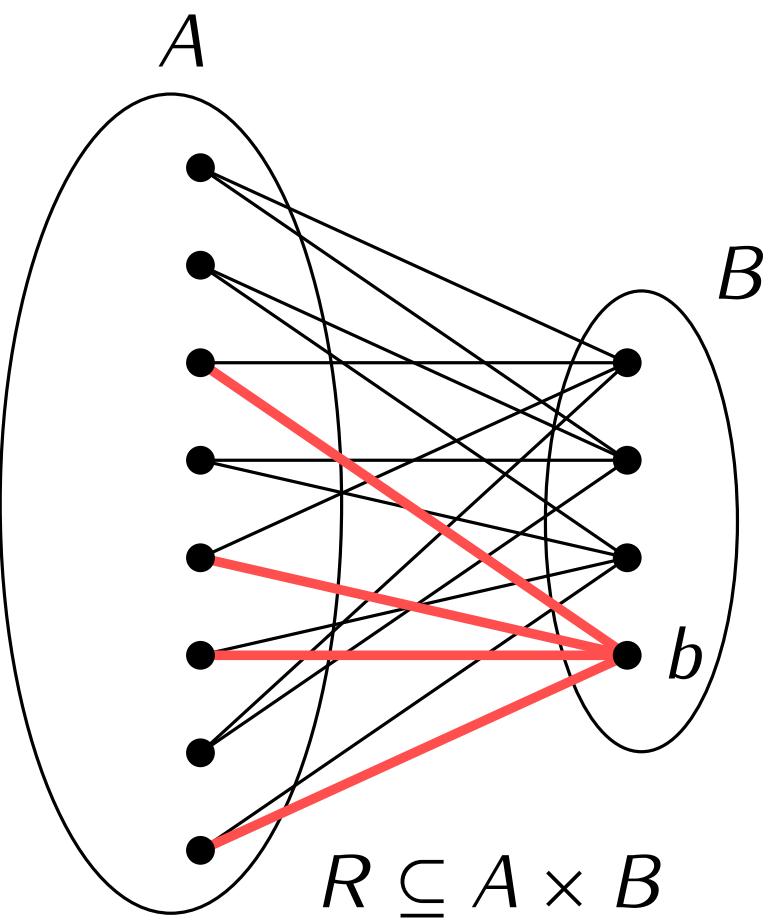


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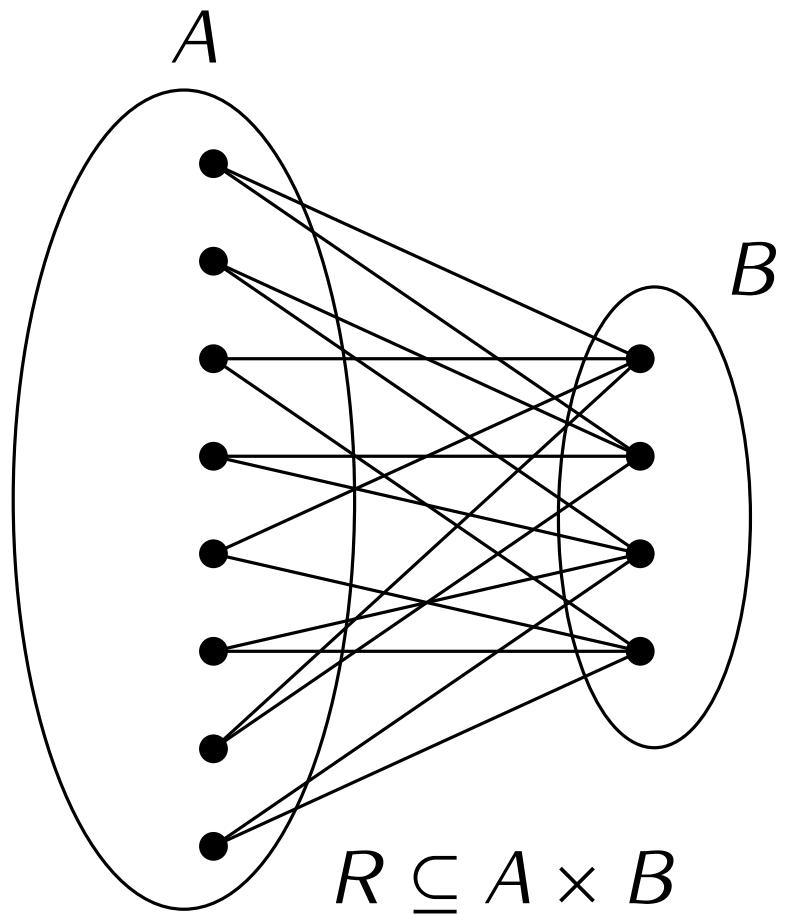
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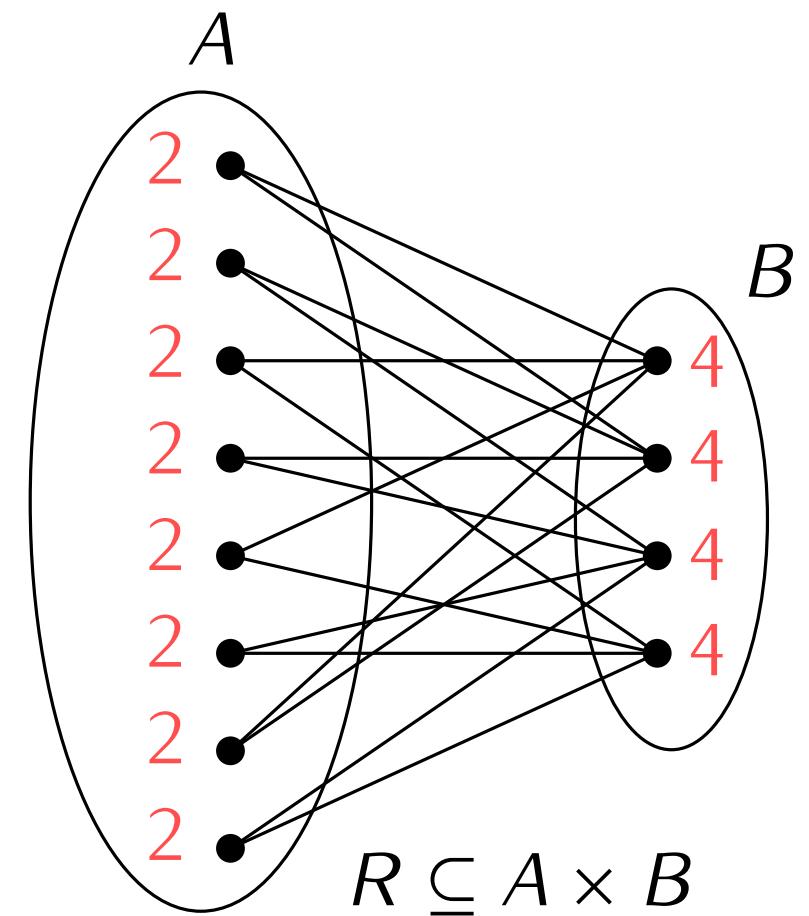
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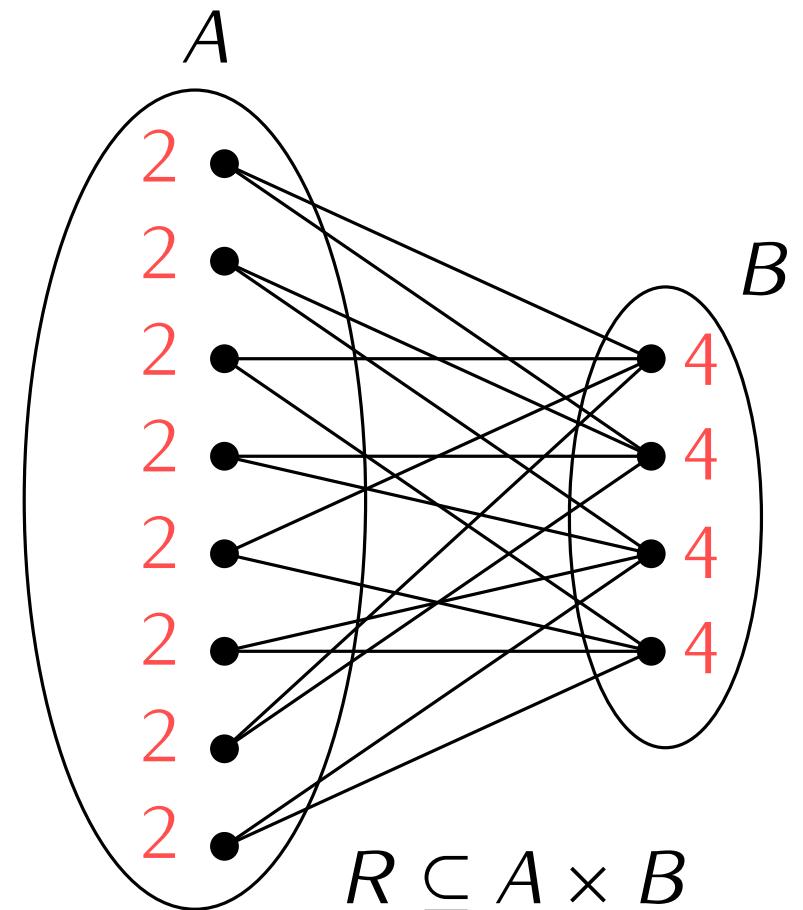
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Proof. Theorem has a $\Sigma \rightsquigarrow$ partition R into subsets

- R_a : all edges “touching” a
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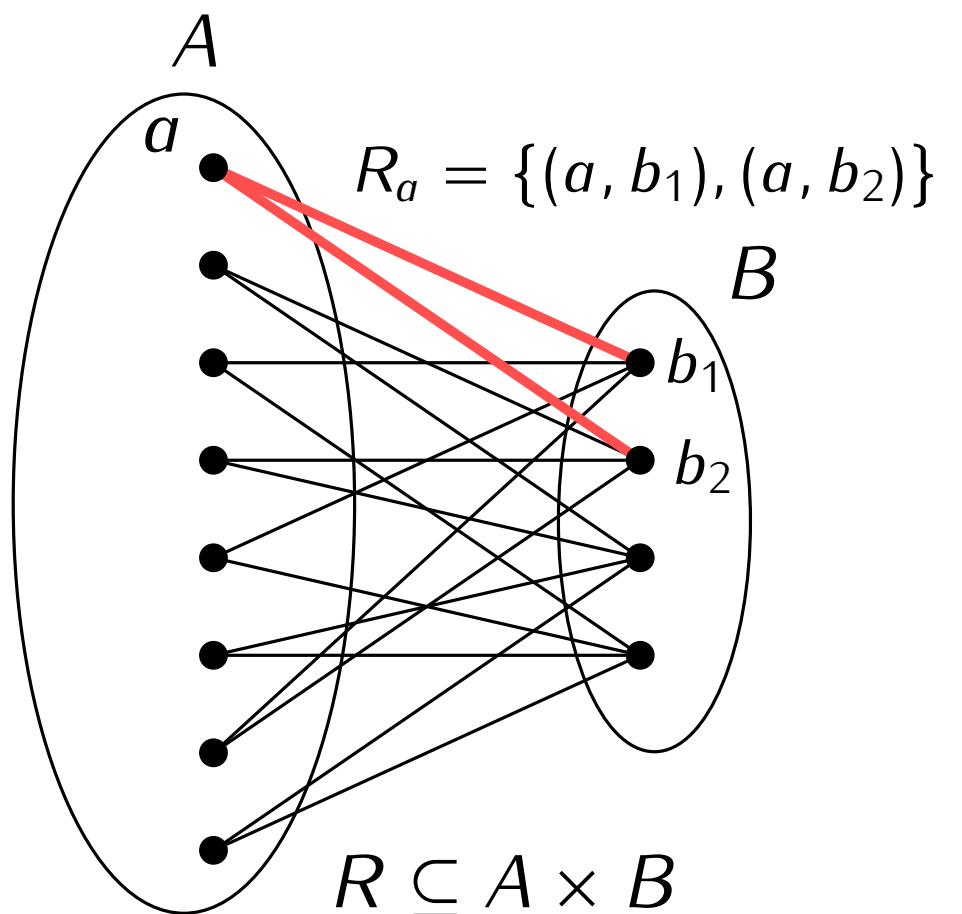
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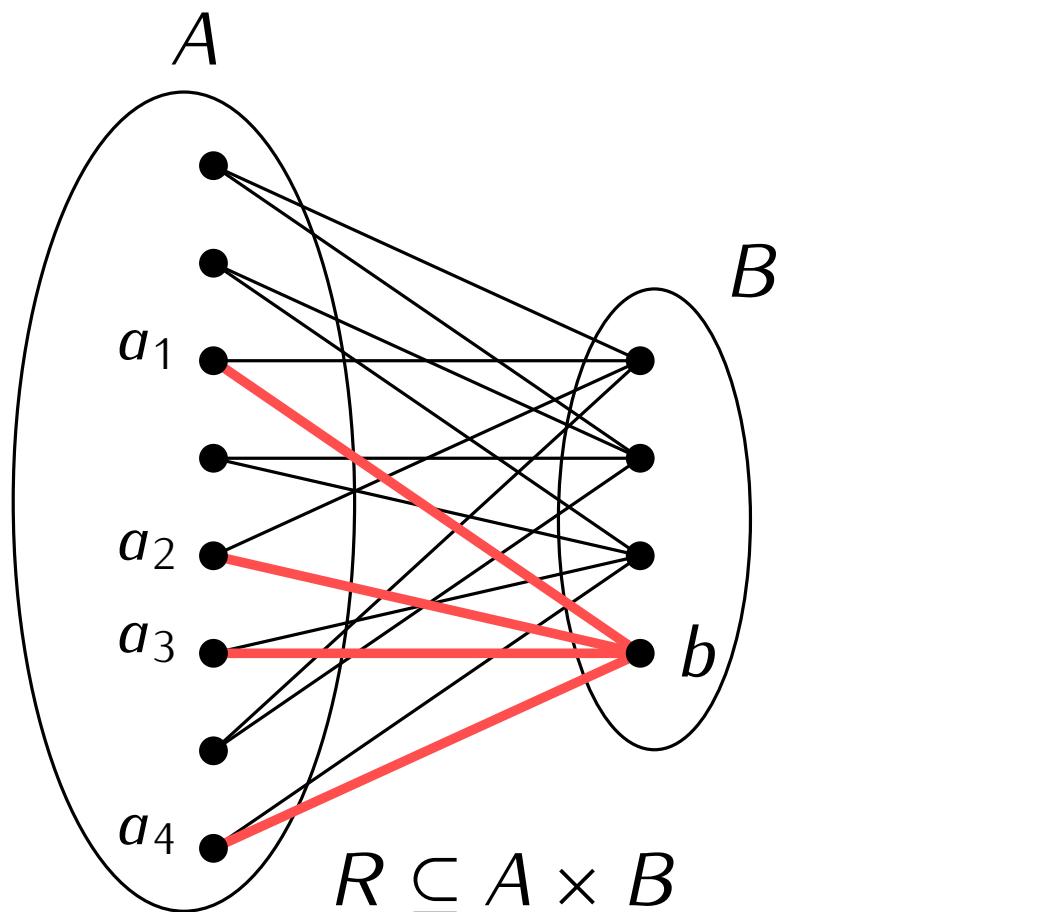
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$$R_b = \{(a_1, b), (a_2, b), (a_3, b), (a_4, b)\}$$

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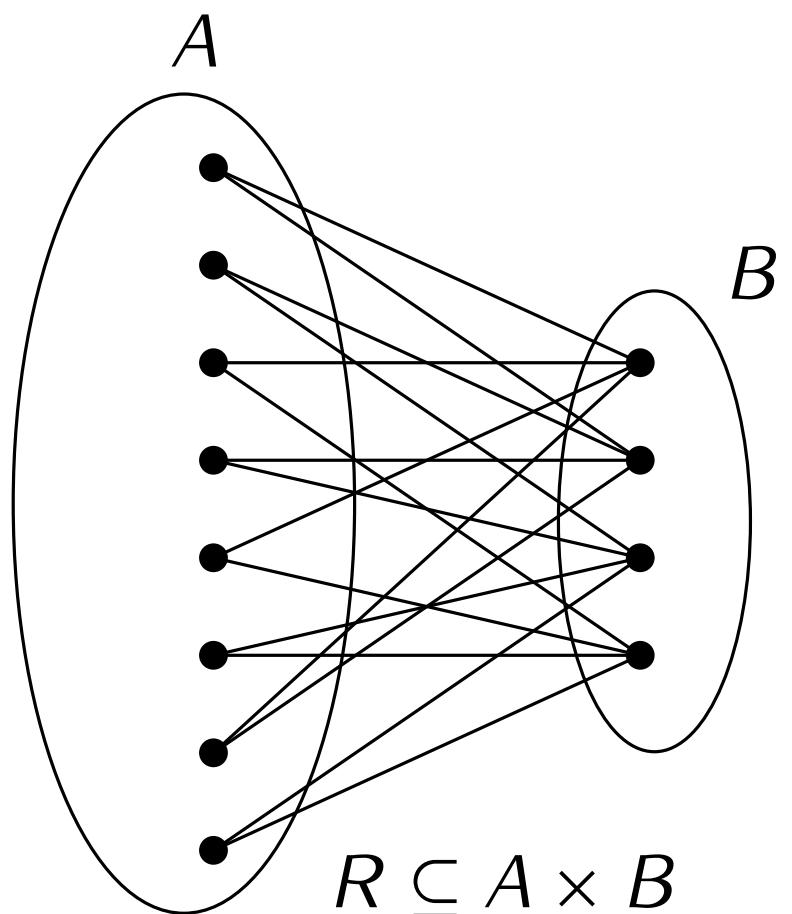
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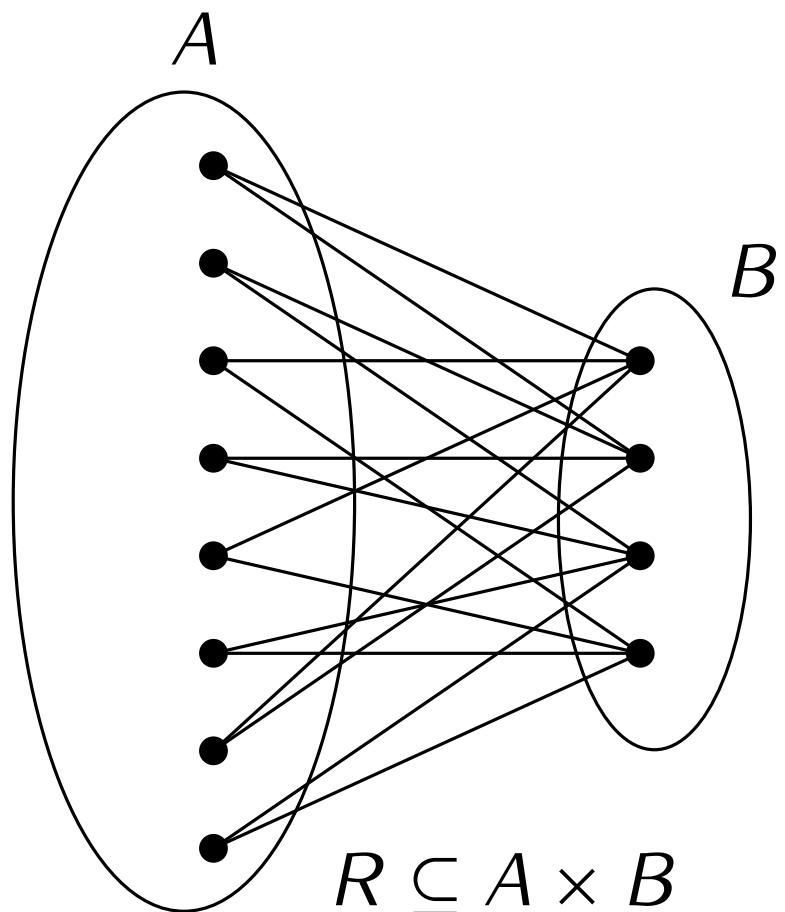
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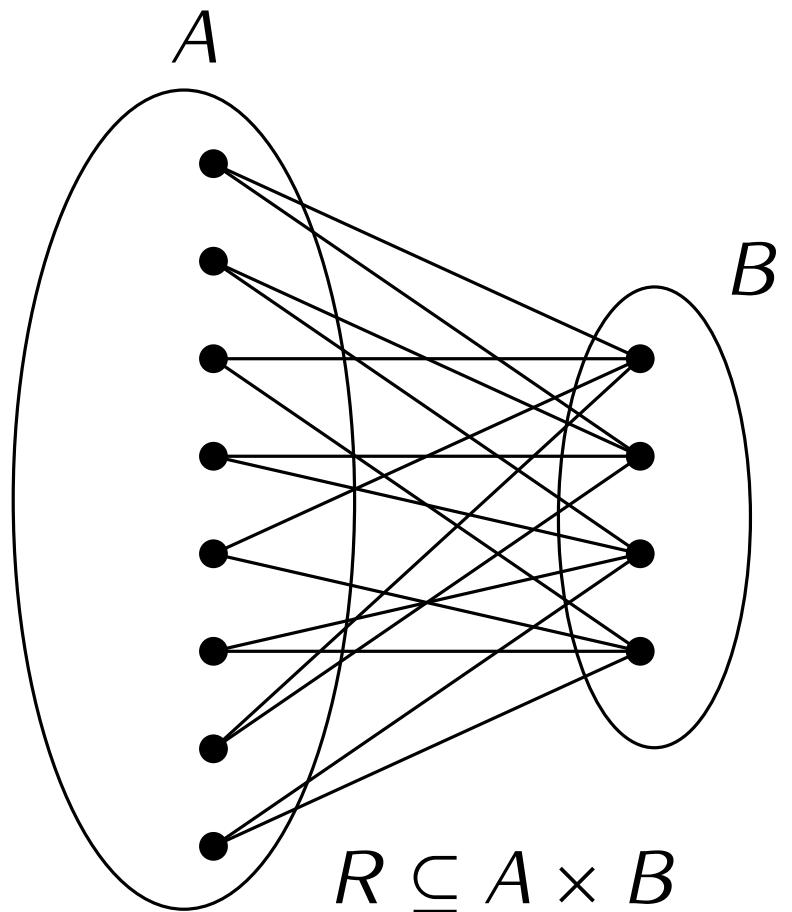
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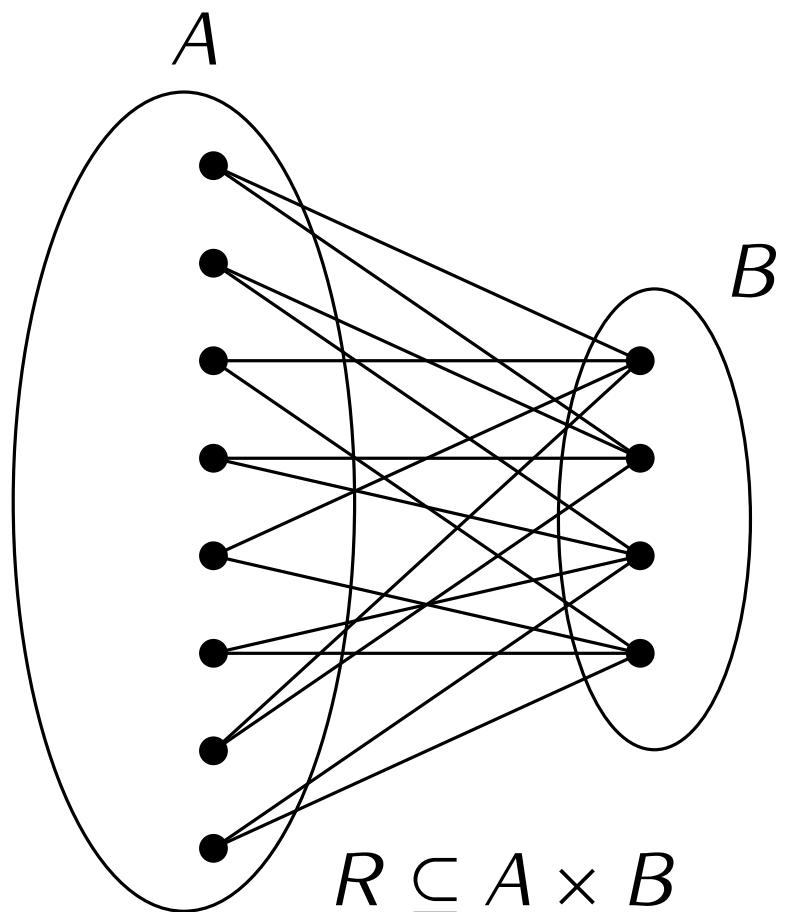
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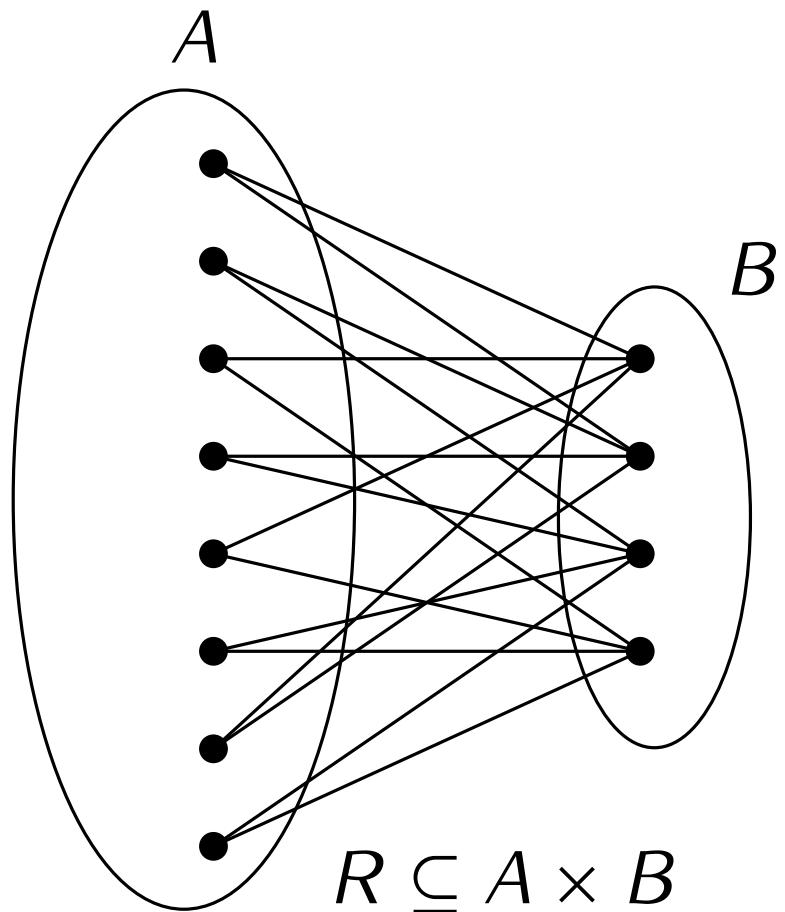
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When to use this?

If:

- The degrees are known
- $|A|$ is known

Then we can know $|B|$.

Example: the binomial coefficient, again

Antoine Wiehe

We have seen: $\binom{n}{k} = \frac{n^k}{k!} = \frac{n!}{k!(n-k)!}$

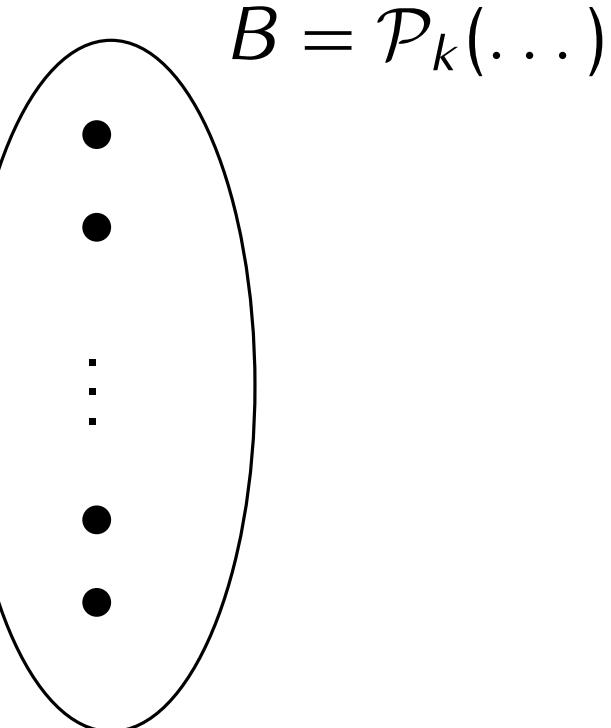
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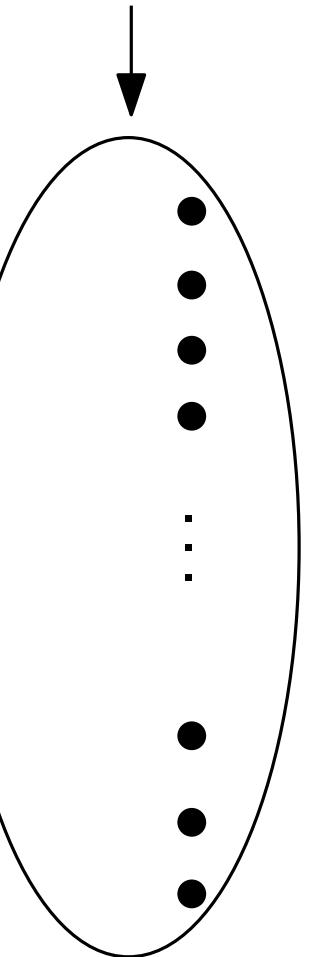
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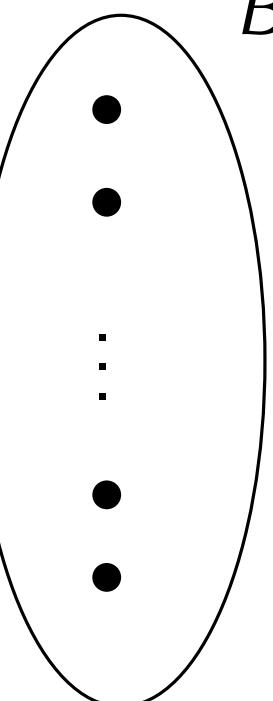
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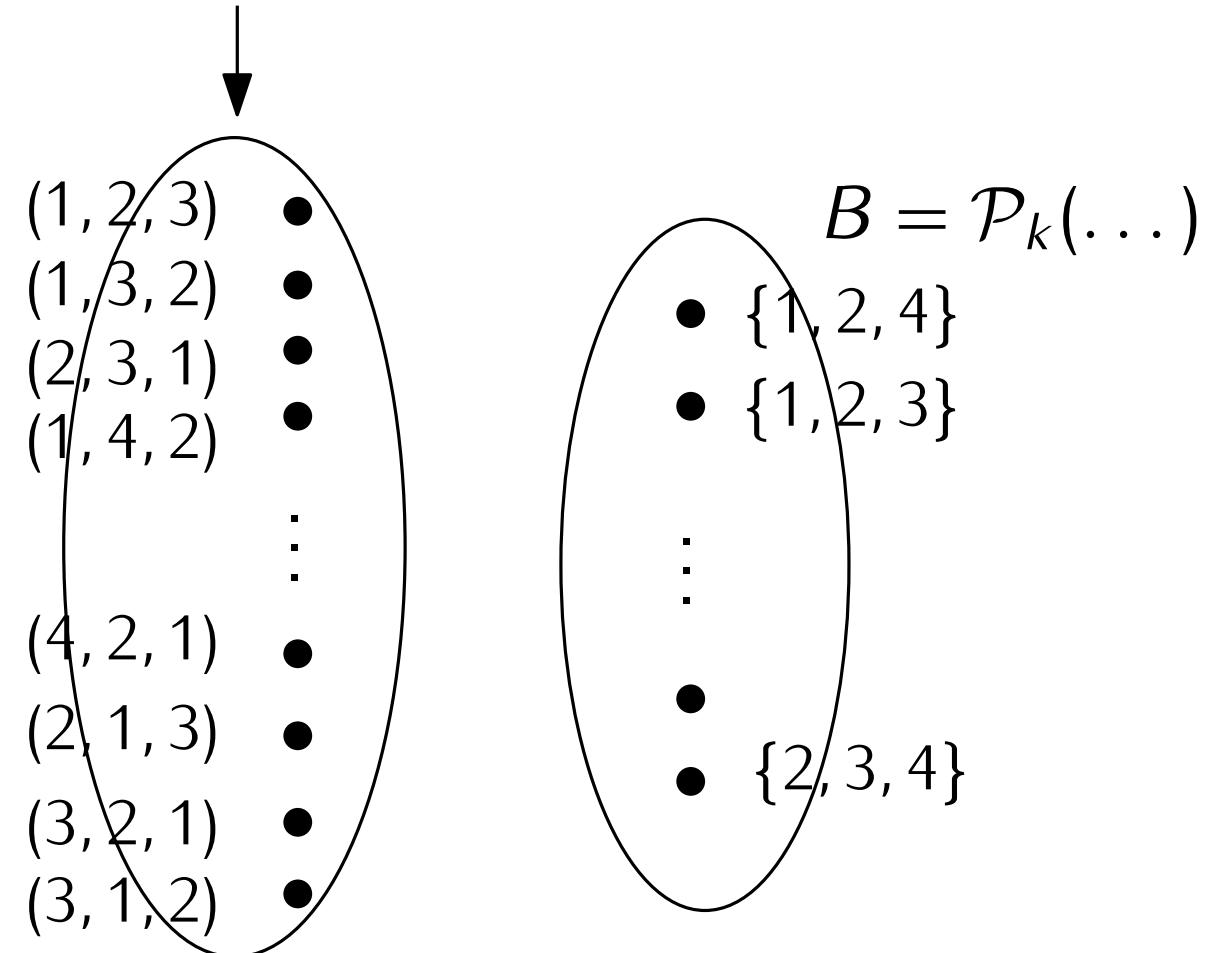
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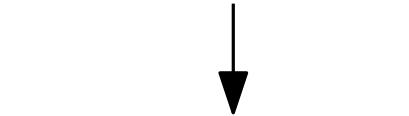
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(1, 2, 3)
(1, 3, 2)
(2, 3, 1)
(1, 4, 2)

⋮
(4, 2, 1)
(2, 1, 3)

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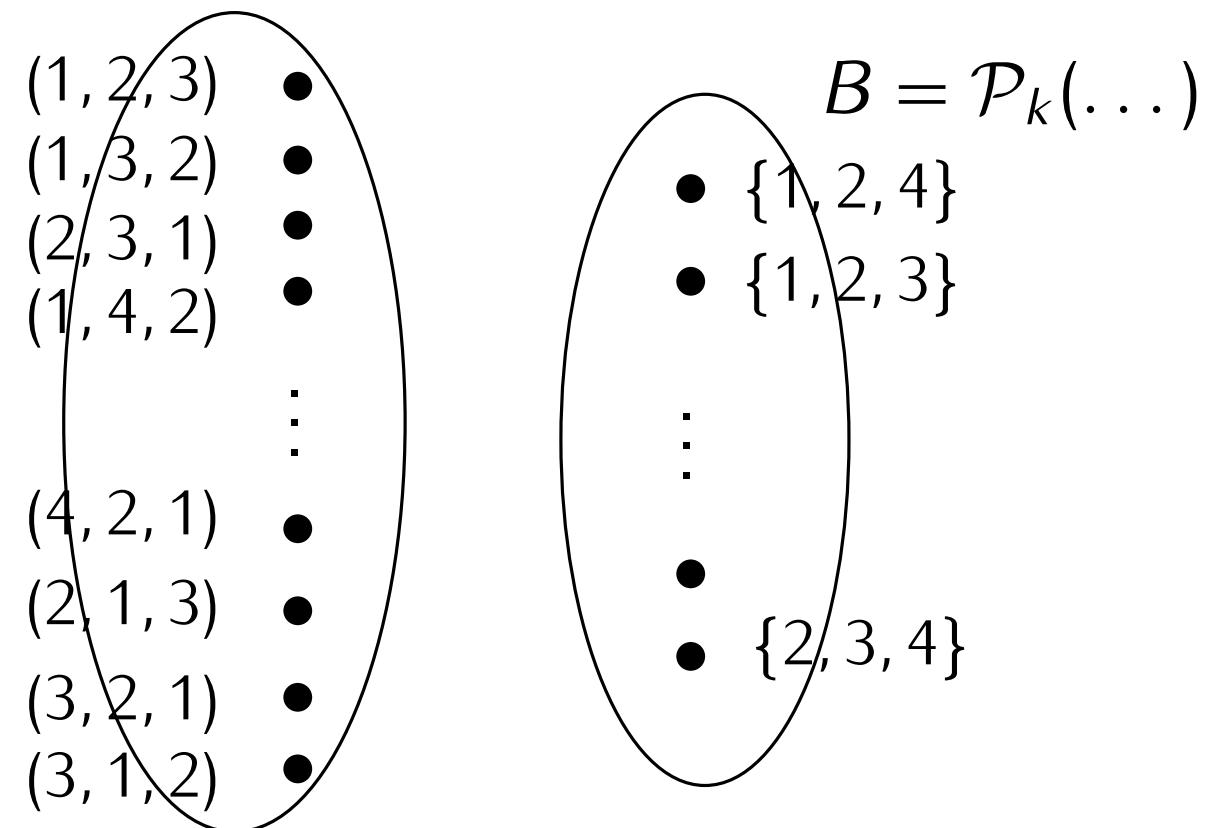
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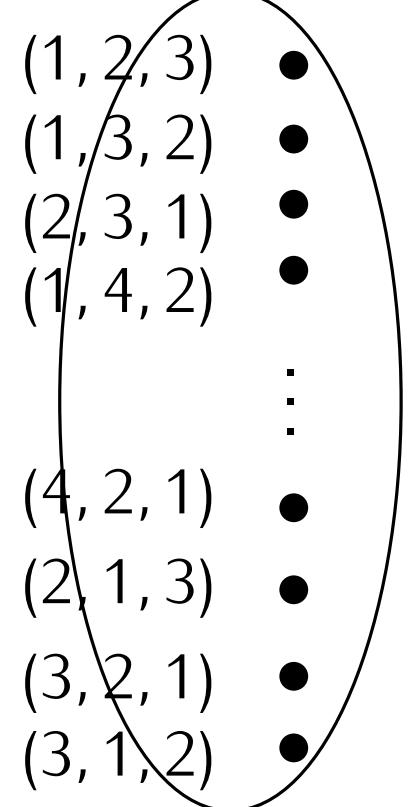
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What is $\deg(T)$ for every $T \in B$?

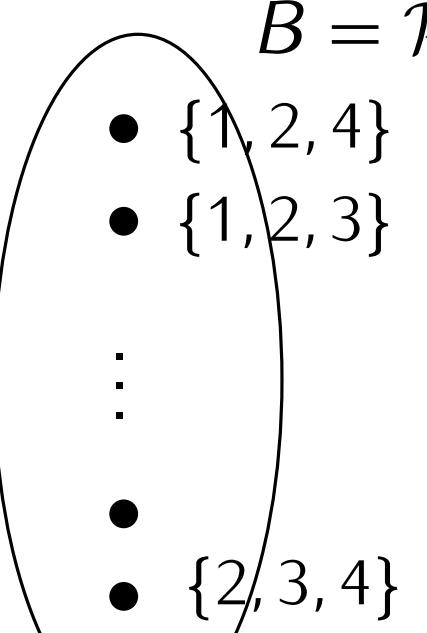
- 1
- $n!$
- $2k$
- $k!$



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$$B = \mathcal{P}_k(\dots)$$



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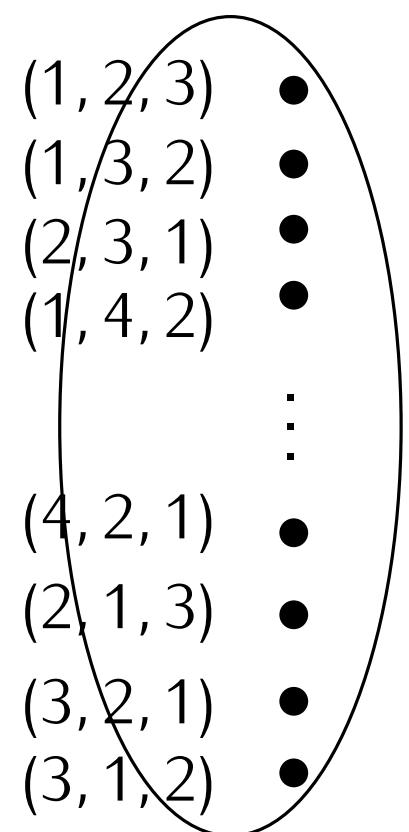
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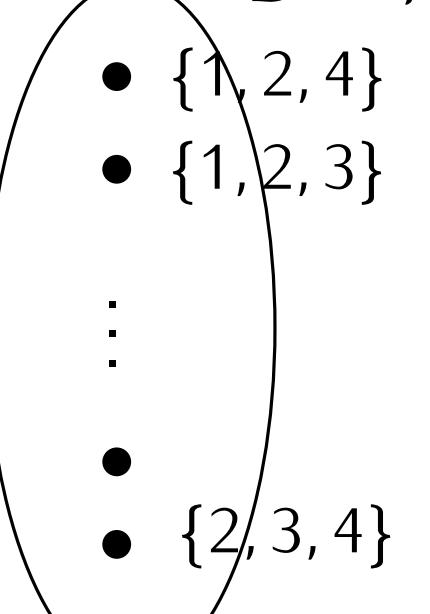
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- degree of elements of B is $k!$

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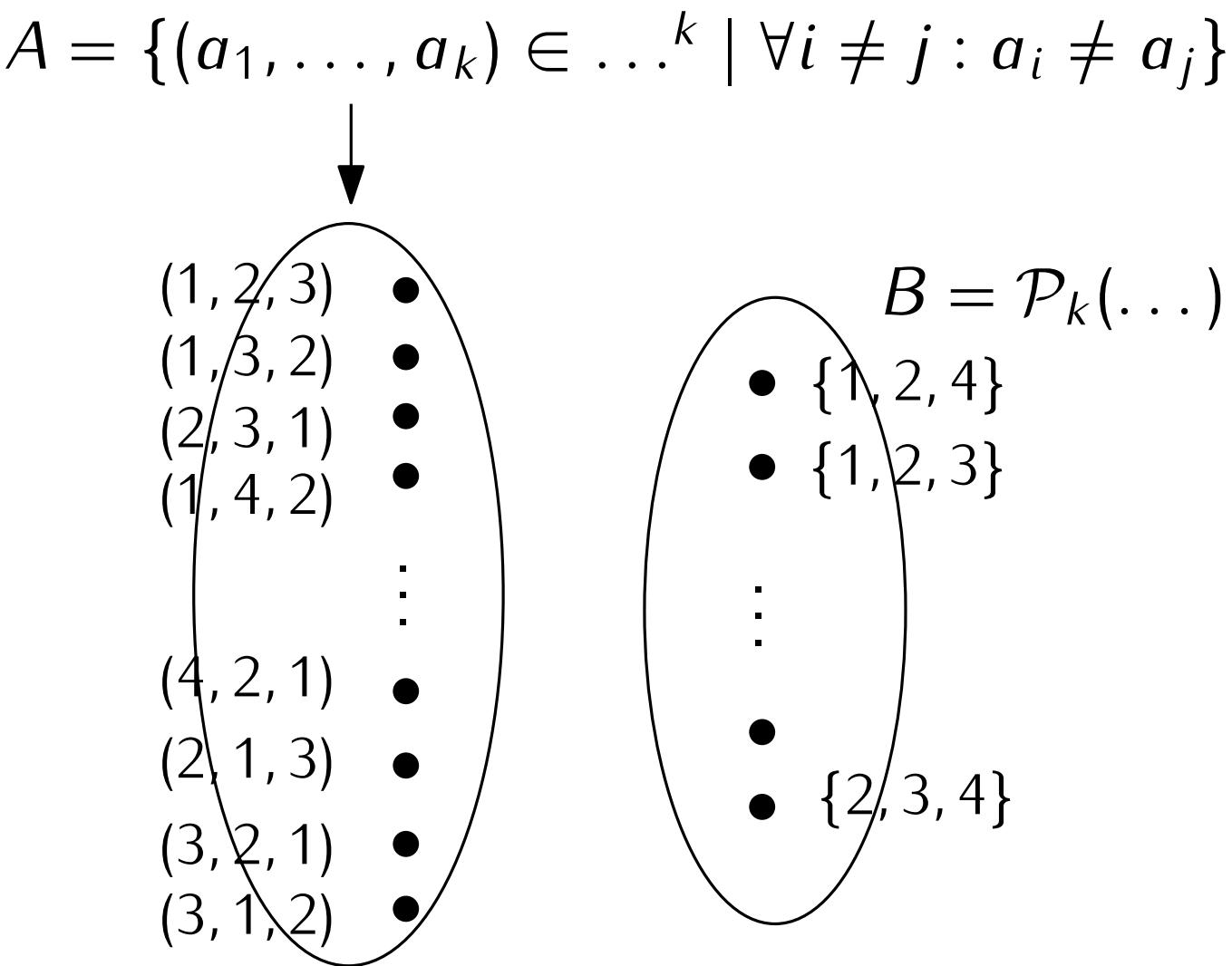
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- Define $A = \{(a_1, \dots, a_k) \in \{1, \dots, n\}^k \mid \forall i \neq j : a_i \neq a_j\}$
- Define $R \subseteq A \times B$:
$$R = \{((a_1, \dots, a_k), T) \in A \times B \mid \{a_1, \dots, a_k\} = T\}$$
- degree of elements of A ?
- degree of elements of B is $k!$

By double-counting:

$$\sum_{a \in A} \deg(a) = \sum_{T \in B} \deg(T)$$



(For the example: $k = 3$)

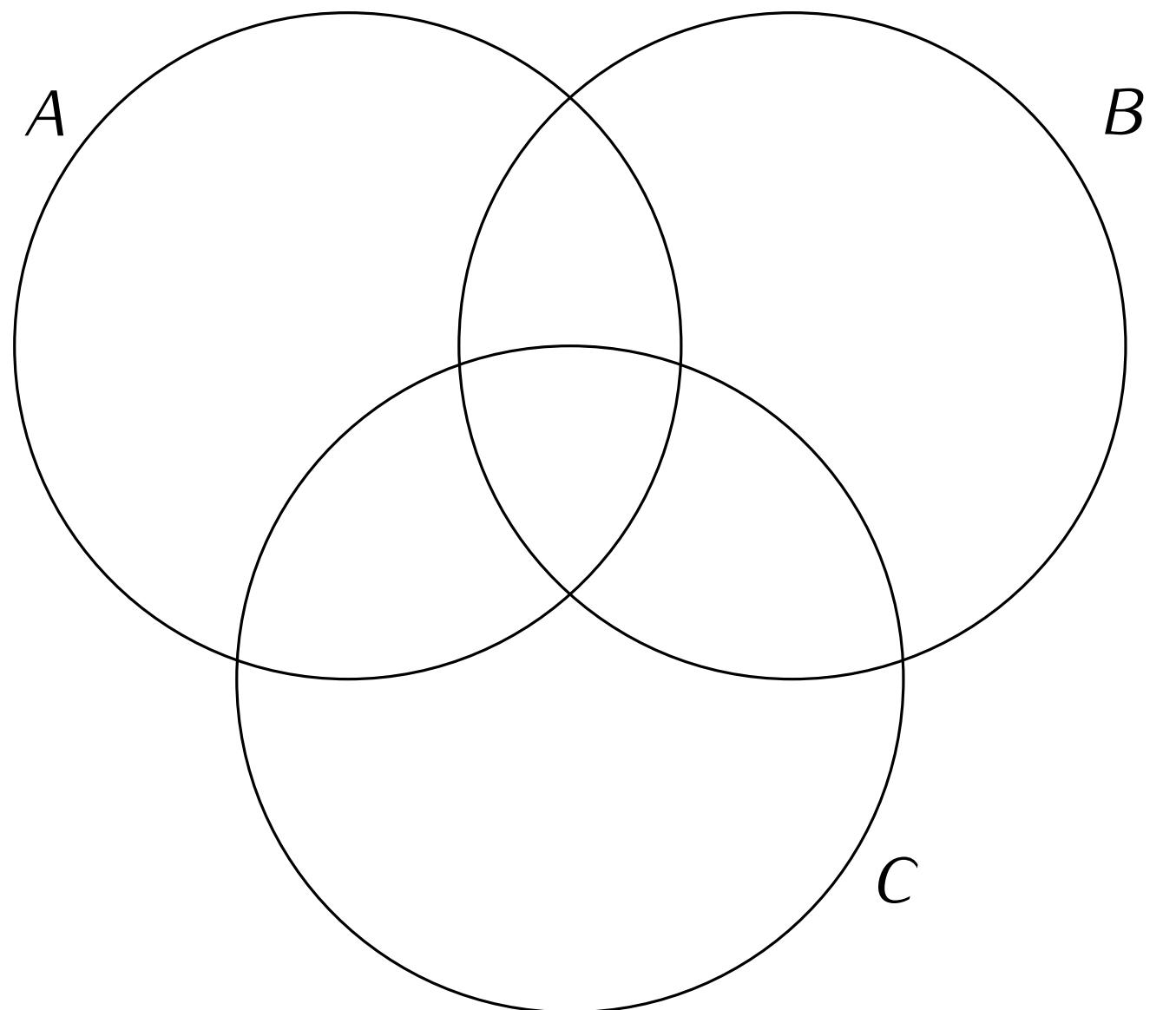
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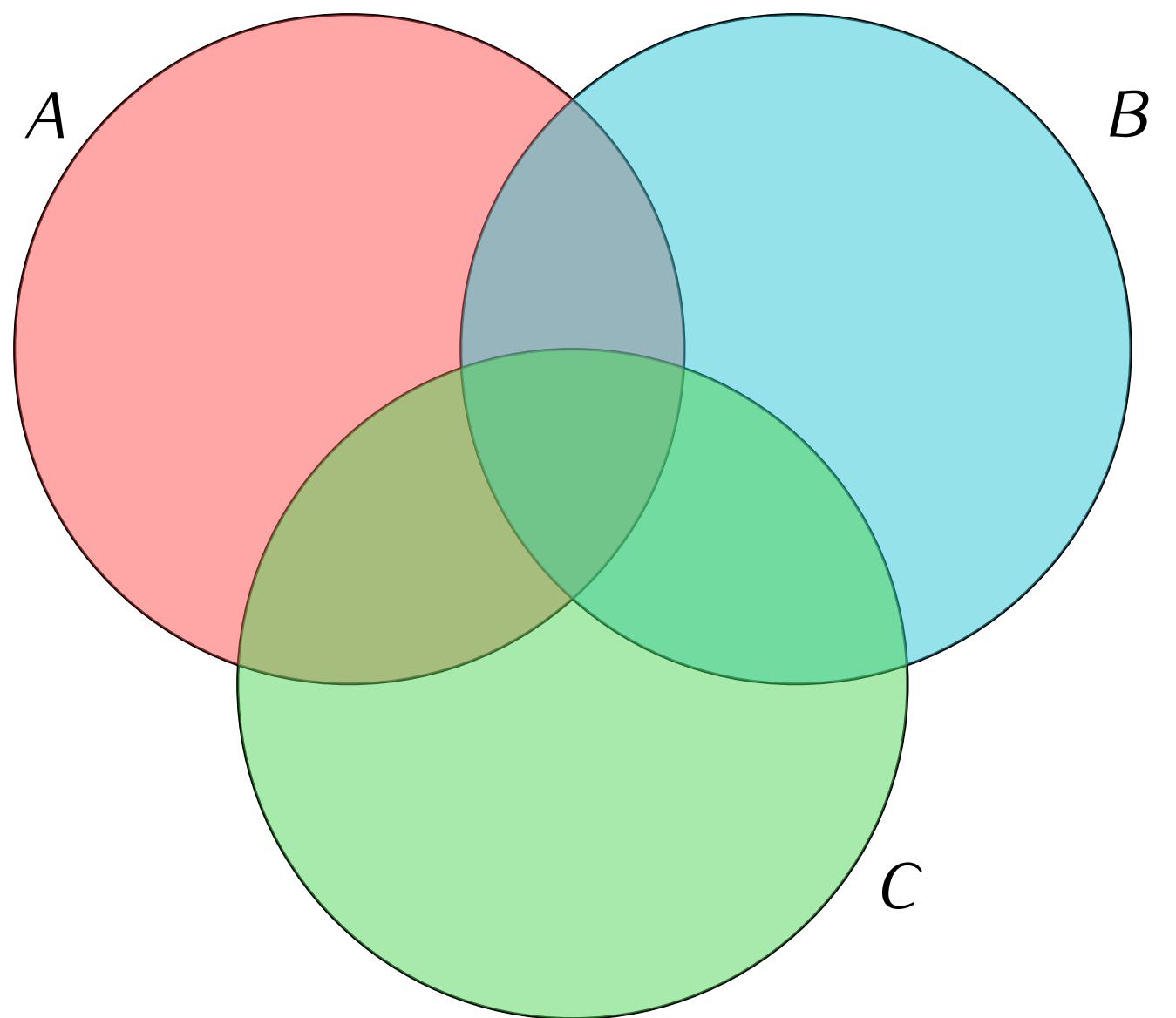
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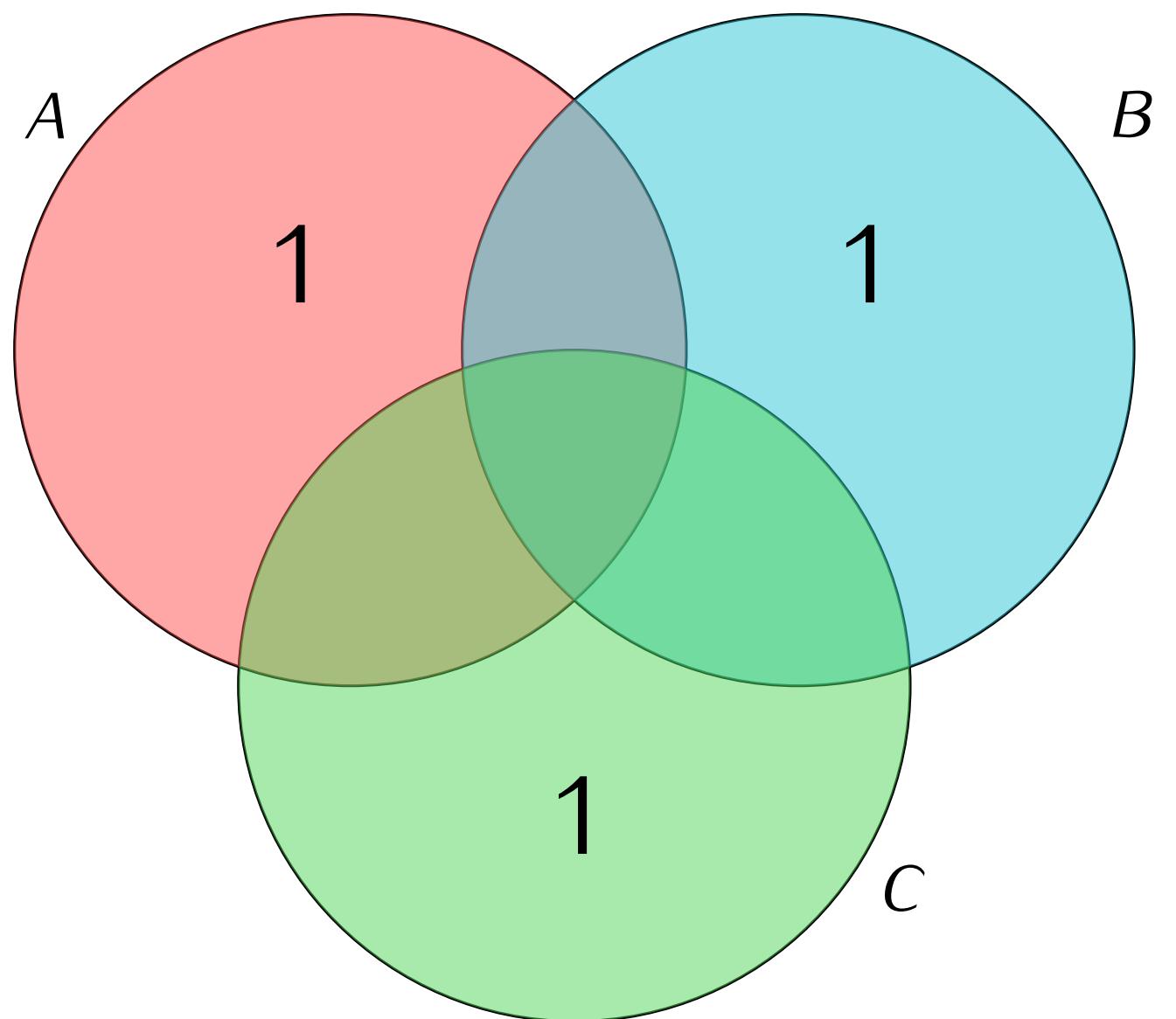
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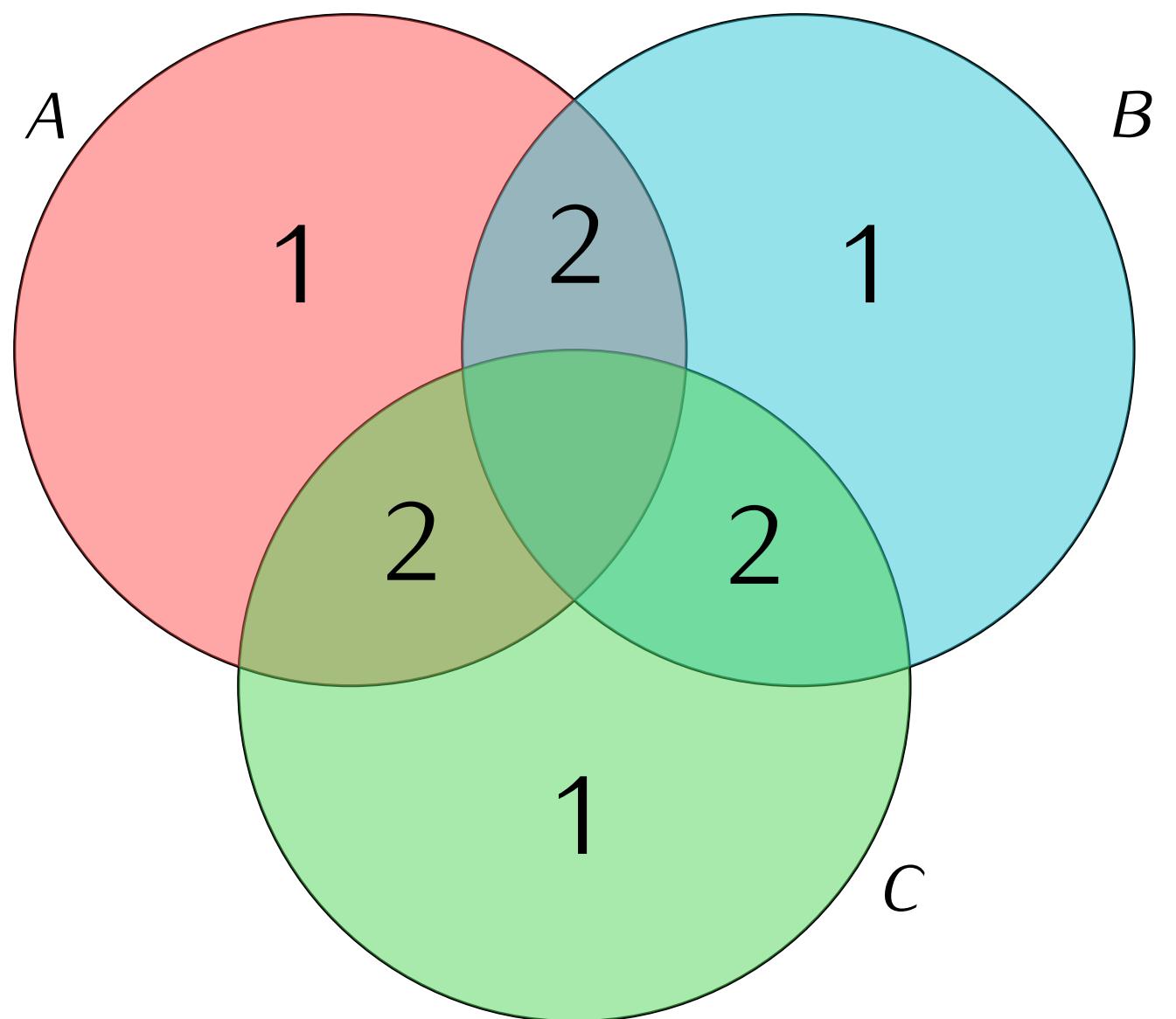
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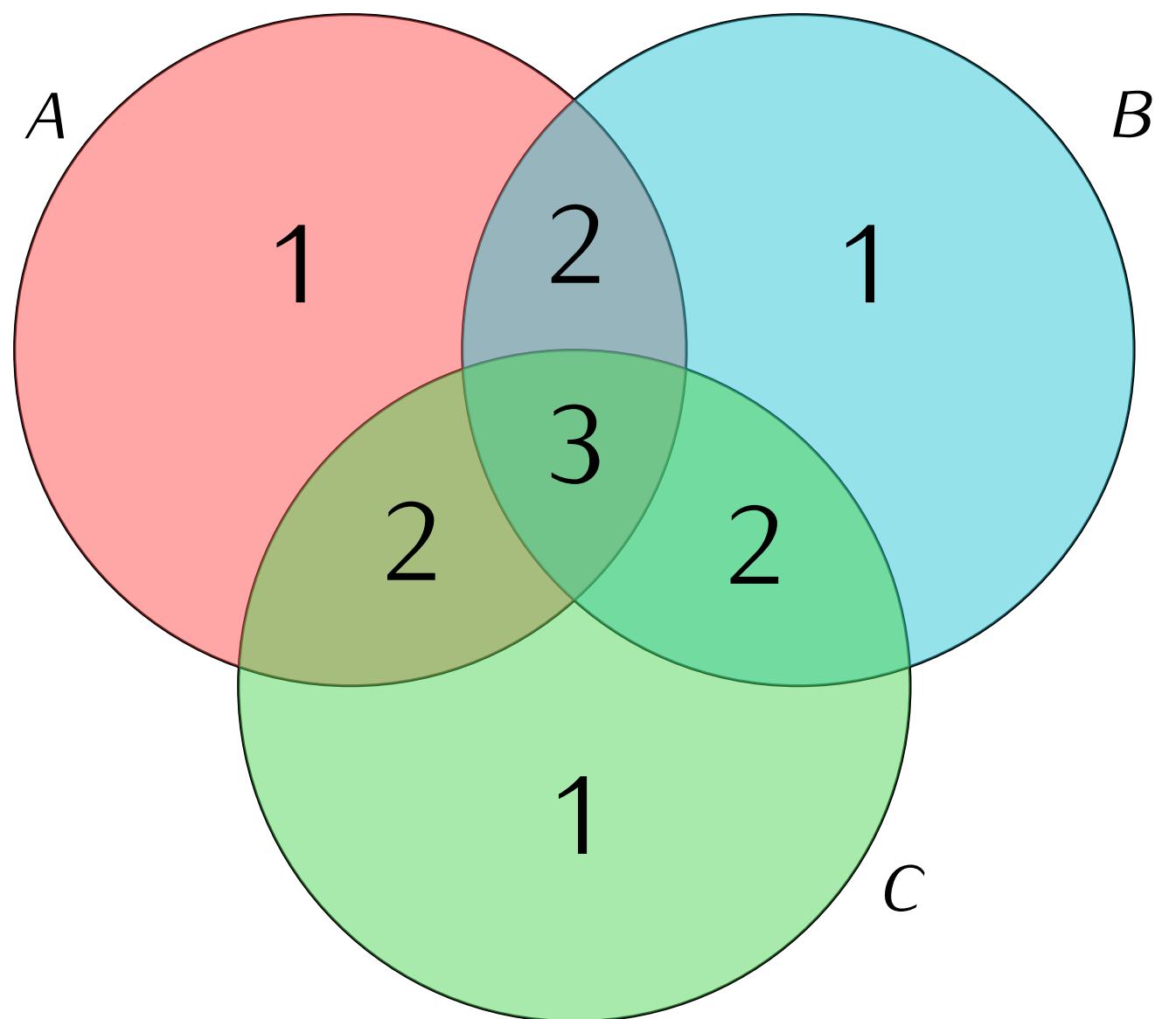
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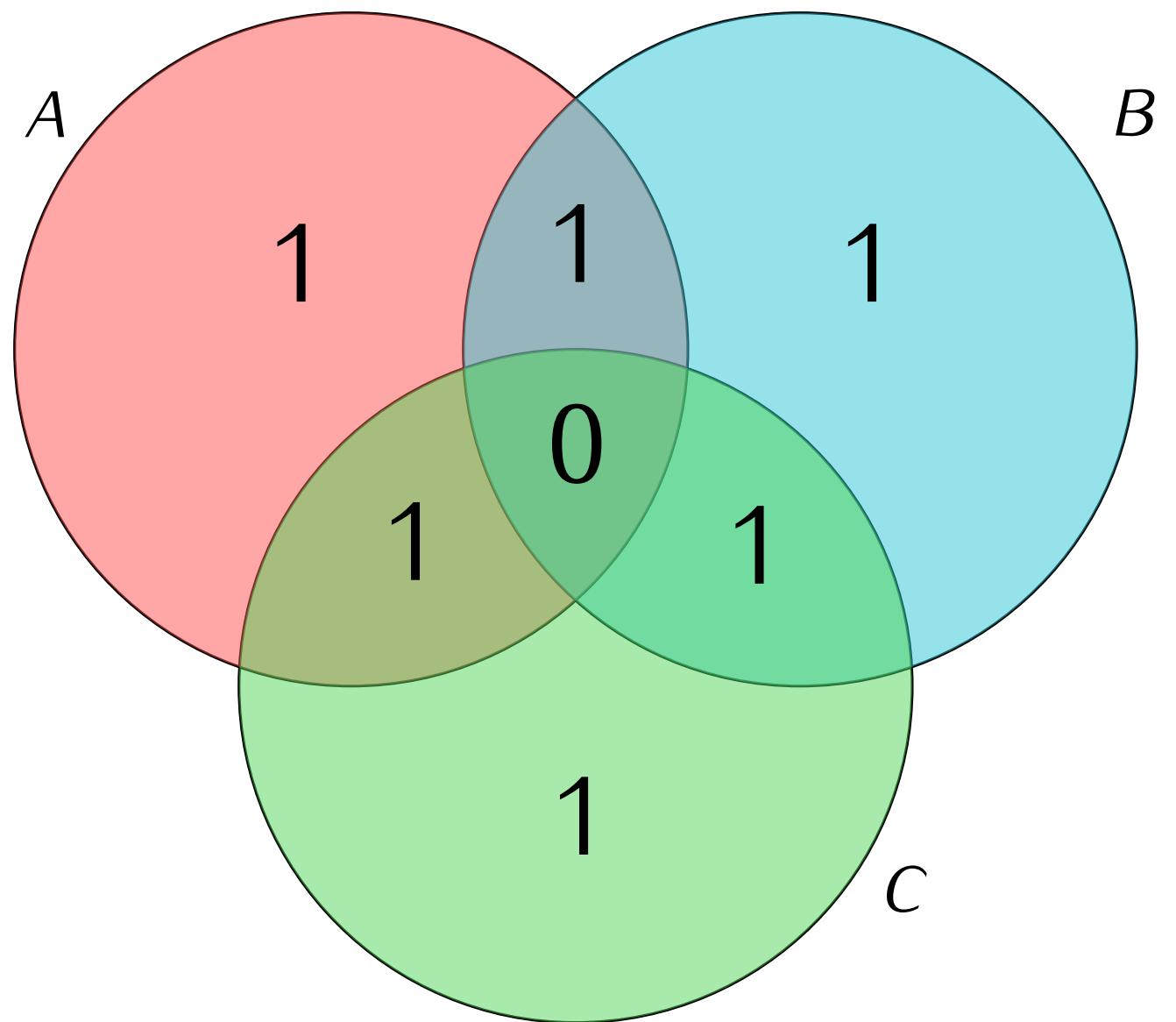
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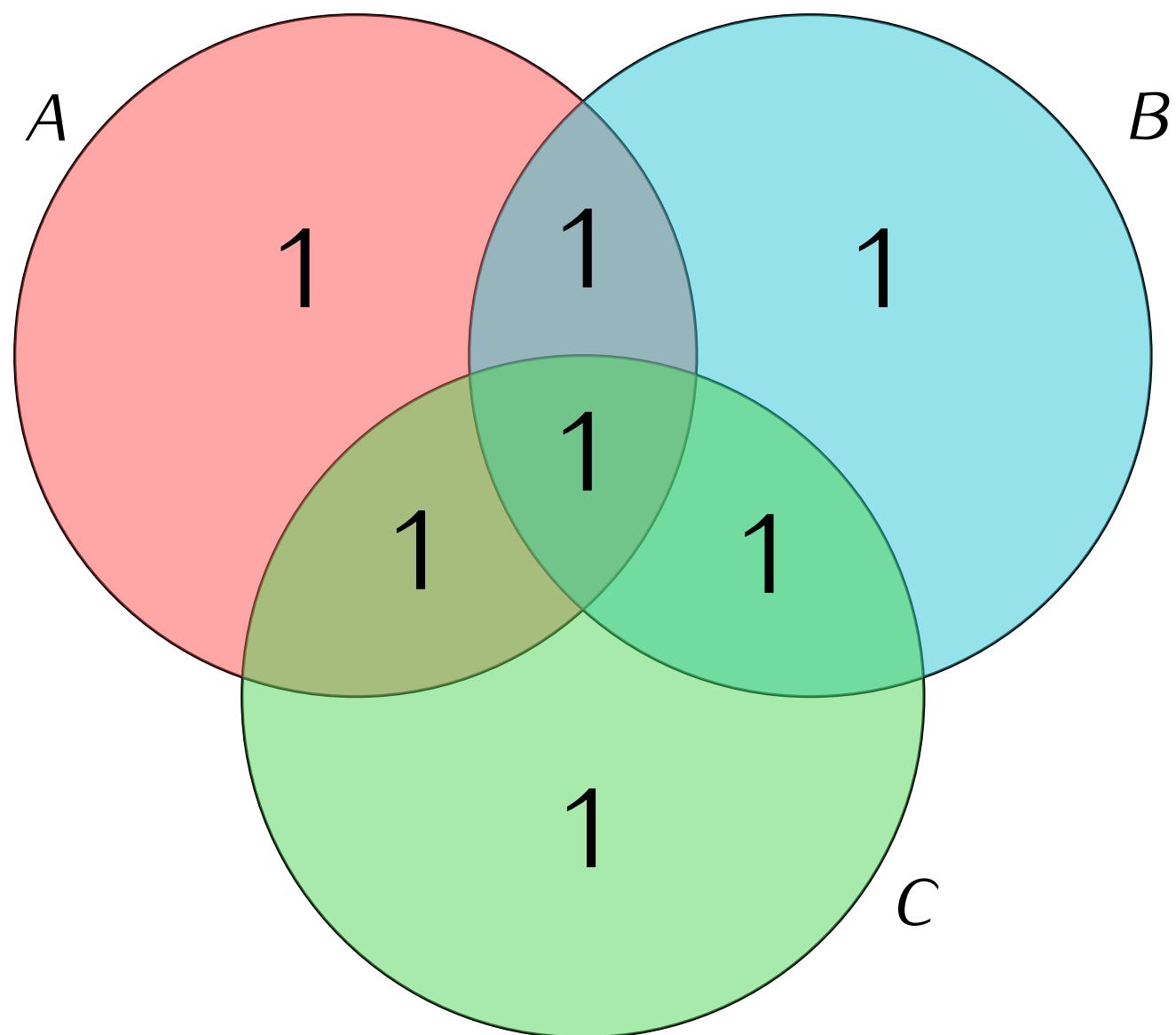
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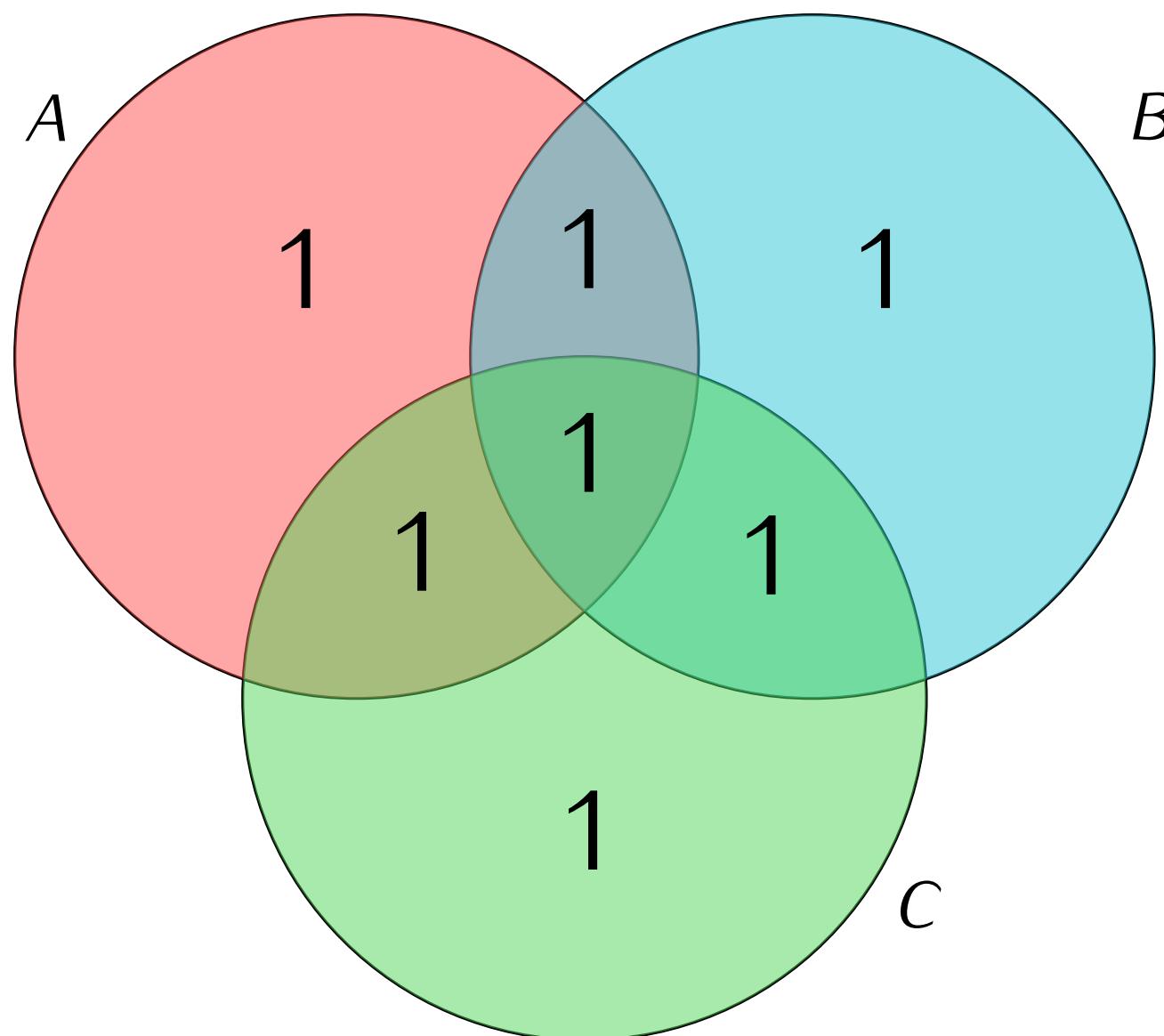
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This is called the **inclusion-exclusion principle**.

Ideally, one would like to be able to count more complicated expressions like $|A \cup B \cup C \cup D|$

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Theorem. If A_1, \dots, A_n are finite sets, then

$$|A_1 \cup \dots \cup A_n| = \sum_{r=1}^n (-1)^{r+1} \sum_{1 \leq i_1 < i_2 < \dots < i_r \leq n} |A_{i_1} \cap \dots \cap A_{i_r}|$$

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In some special cases, all the intersections $|A_{i_1} \cap \dots \cap A_{i_r}|$ have the same size N_r , we then get:

Theorem. Let A_1, \dots, A_n be finite sets and $N_1, \dots, N_n \in \mathbb{N}$ be such that for all $r \in \{1, \dots, n\}$ and all distinct $i_1, \dots, i_r \in \{1, \dots, n\}$, the intersection $A_{i_1} \cap \dots \cap A_{i_r}$ has size N_r . Then

$$|A_1 \cup \dots \cup A_n| = \sum_{r=1}^n (-1)^{r+1} \binom{n}{r} N_r$$

(From projecteuler.net)

At Least Four Distinct Prime Factors Less Than 100

Problem 268



It can be verified that there are 23 positive integers less than 1000 that are divisible by at least four distinct primes less than 100.

Find how many positive integers less than 10^{16} are divisible by at least four distinct primes less than 100.

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Naive attempt:

```
from itertools import combinations

smallPrimes = primes(100) # compute all primes up to 100
finalSet = set()
for (p1,p2,p3,p4) in
    :
print(len(finalSet))
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Naive attempt:

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from itertools import combinations

smallPrimes = primes(100) # compute all primes up to 100
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for (p1,p2,p3,p4) in combinations(smallPrimes,4):

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from itertools import combinations

smallPrimes = primes(100) # compute all primes up to 100
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for (p1,p2,p3,p4) in combinations(smallPrimes,4):
    # take all multiples of p1*p2*p3*p4 that are smaller than 10^16
    for k in range(10**16 / (p1*p2*p3*p4)):
        finalSet = finalSet | {p1*p2*p3*p4 * k}
print(len(finalSet)) # outputs the correct number
```

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How many times did we count $2 \times 3 \times 5 \times 7 \times 11$?

Application: speeding up an algorithm

Antoine Wiehe

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-4
p₁, p₂, p₃, p₄, p₅ distinct

$$\sum_{p_1, p_2, p_3, p_4, p_5 \text{ distinct}} |D_{p_1 p_2 p_3 p_4 p_5}|$$

How many times did we count $2 \times 3 \times 5 \times 7 \times 11$? $\binom{5}{4} = 5$ times

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How many times did we count $p_1 \times p_2 \times \dots \times p_r$? $1 - (-1)^r \binom{r-1}{3}$ times

$$|S| = \sum_{p_1, p_2, p_3, p_4 \text{ distinct}} |D_{p_1 p_2 p_3 p_4}| - 4 \sum_{p_1, \dots, p_5 \text{ distinct}} |D_{p_1 p_2 p_3 p_4 p_5}| + \dots + (-1)^r \binom{r-1}{3} \sum_{p_1, \dots, p_r \text{ distinct}} |D_{p_1 \dots p_r}|$$

```
from itertools import combinations # iterator on subsets
from math import comb # gives the binomial coefficients

smallPrimes = primes(100)
result = 0
N = 10**16
for r in range(4,len(smallPrimes)+1):
    sum_for_fixed_r = 0
    for combination_of_primes in combinations(smallPrimes,r)
        product = 1
        for p in combination_of_primes:
            product *= p
        sum_for_fixed_r += N//product
    result += (-1)**r * comb(r-1,3) * sum_for_fixed_r
print(result)
```

What we have seen so far: if A, B are finite, then there are:

- $|B|^{|A|}$ functions $f: A \rightarrow B$
- $|B|^{\underline{|A|}}$ **injective** functions $f: A \rightarrow B$

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- (1) If we know the number of functions that are **not** surjective, we know the number of surjective functions
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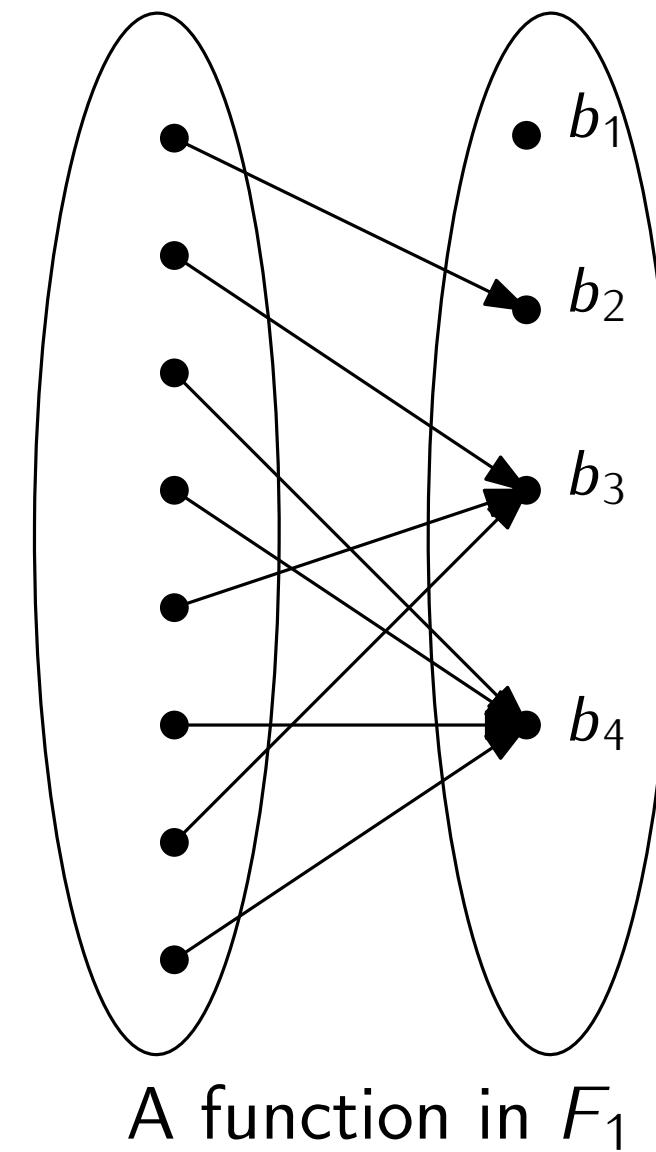
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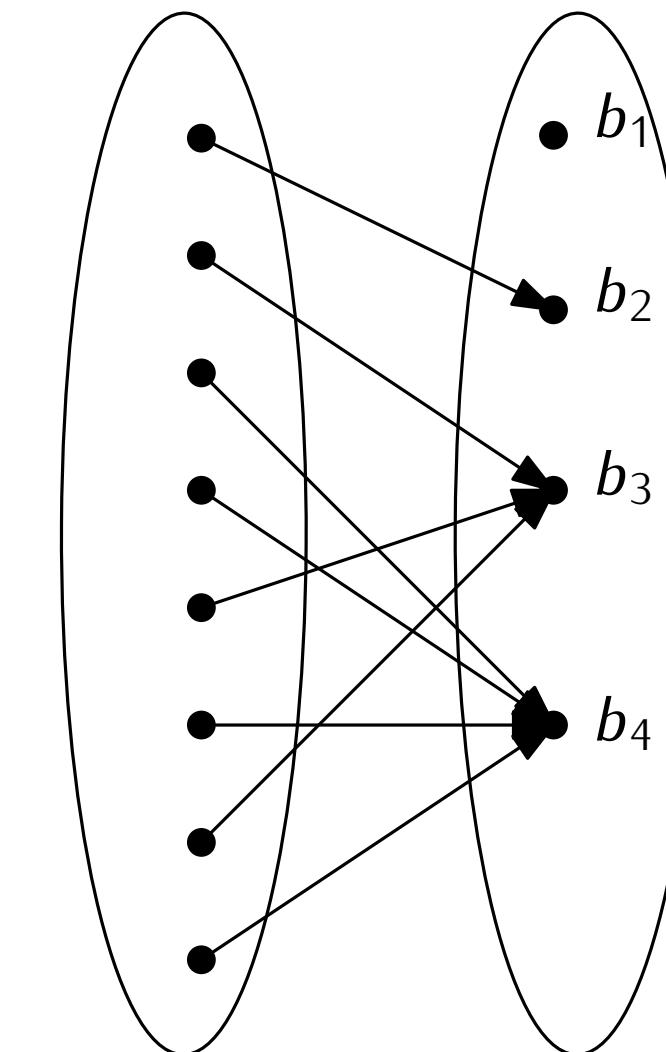
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Suppose $|A| = 8$ and $|B| = 4$.
What is $|F_i|$?

- 4
- 4^7
- 3^8
- 3^7



A function in F_1

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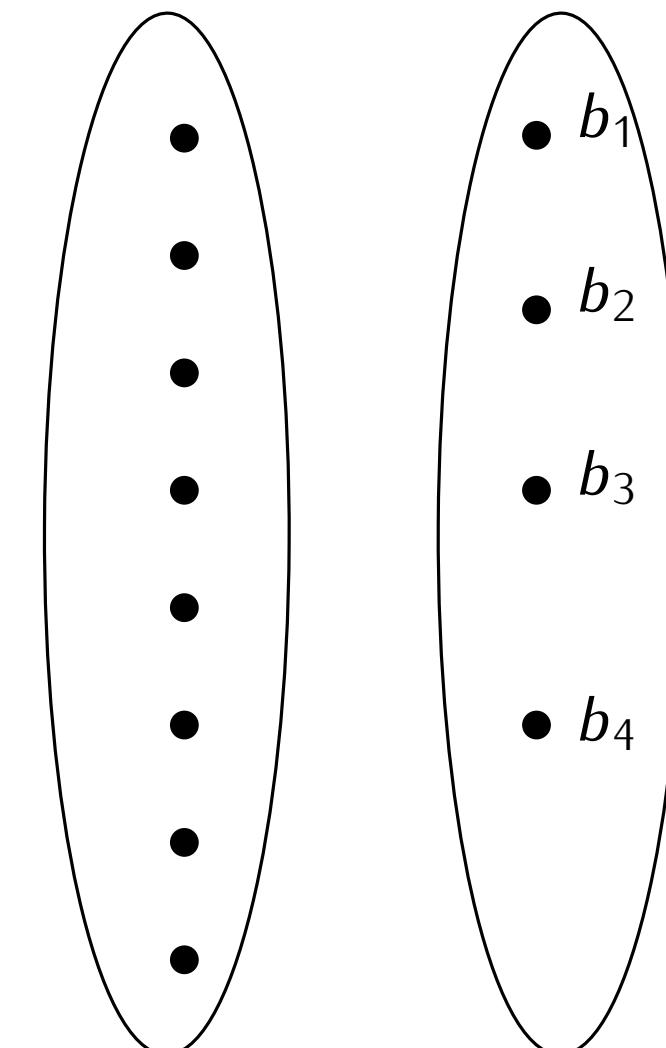
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A function in $F_1 \cap F_2$?

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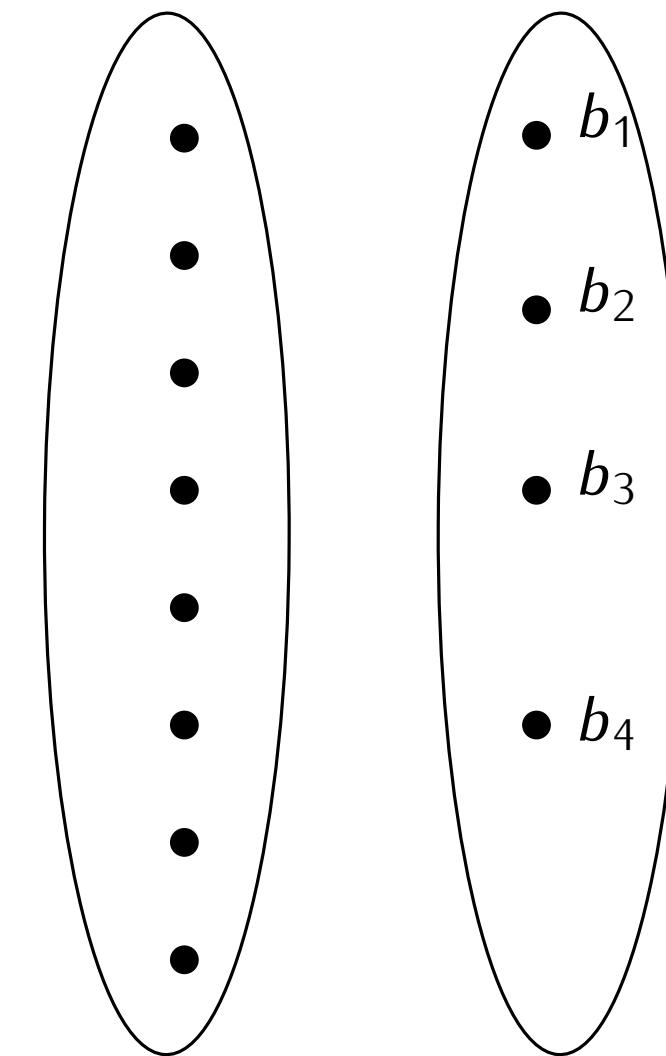
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$$\text{Let } F_i = \{f: A \rightarrow B \mid b_i \notin f[A]\}$$

$$|F_i \cap F_j| = (|B| - 2)^{|A|} \text{ if } i < j$$

$$|F_i \cap F_j \cap F_k| = \dots \quad \text{if } i < j < k$$



A function in $F_1 \cap F_2 \cap F_3$?

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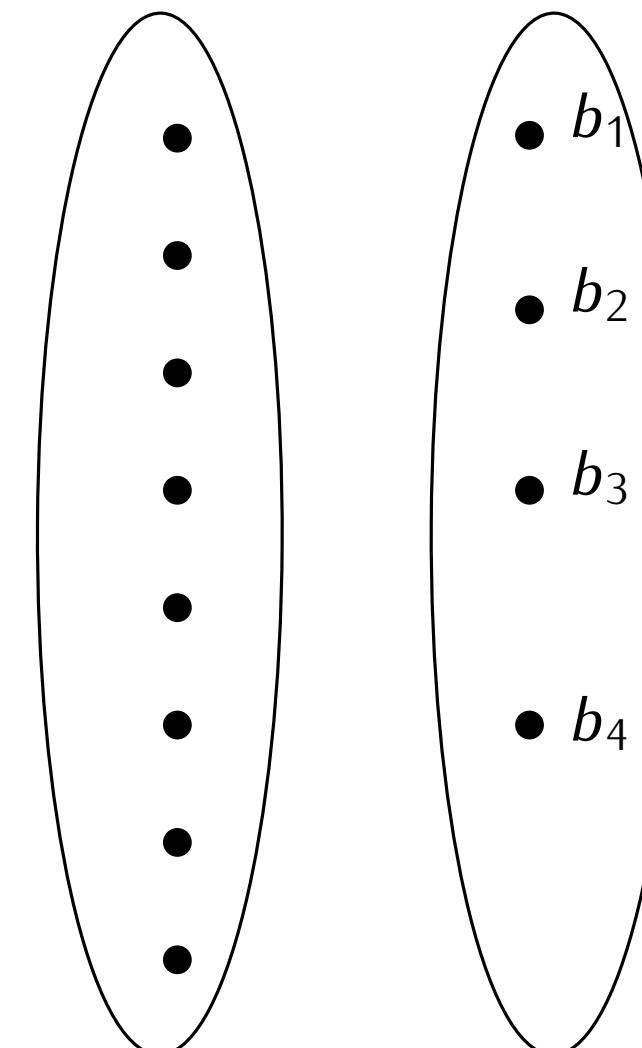
(2) The set of **not surjective functions** is the union of simple sets

$$\text{Let } F_i = \{f: A \rightarrow B \mid b_i \notin f[A]\}$$

$$|F_i \cap F_j| = (|B| - 2)^{|A|} \text{ if } i < j$$

$$|F_i \cap F_j \cap F_k| = (|B| - 3)^{|A|} \text{ if } i < j < k$$

$$|F_{i_1} \cap \dots \cap F_{i_r}| = \dots \quad \text{if } i_1 < \dots < i_r$$



What we have seen so far: if A, B are finite, then there are:

- $|B|^{|A|}$ functions $f: A \rightarrow B$
- $|B|^{\underline{|A|}}$ **injective** functions $f: A \rightarrow B$

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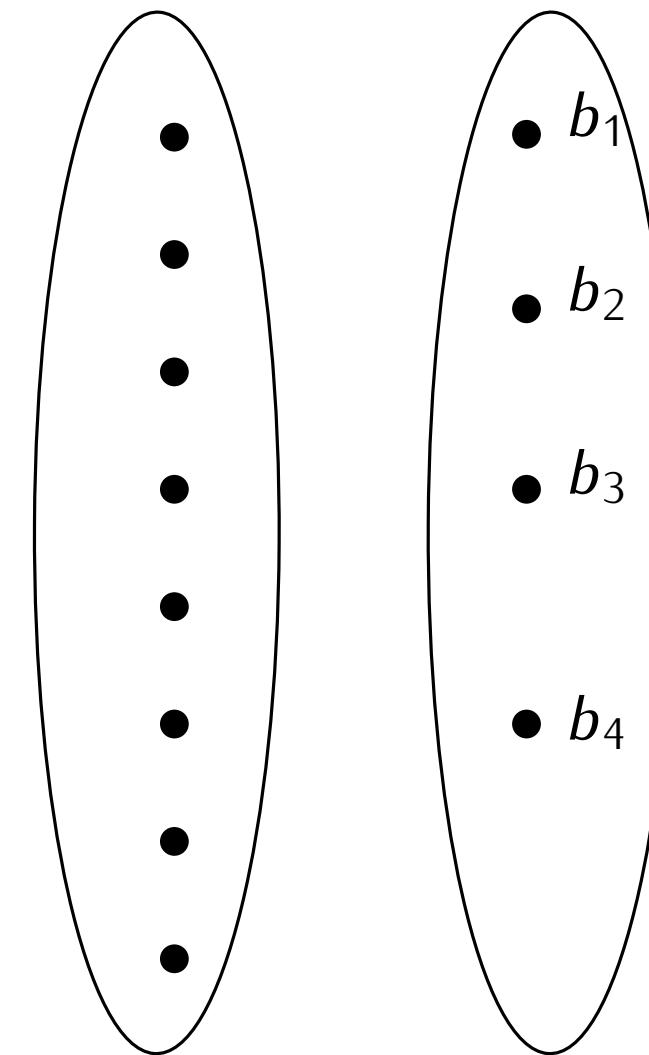
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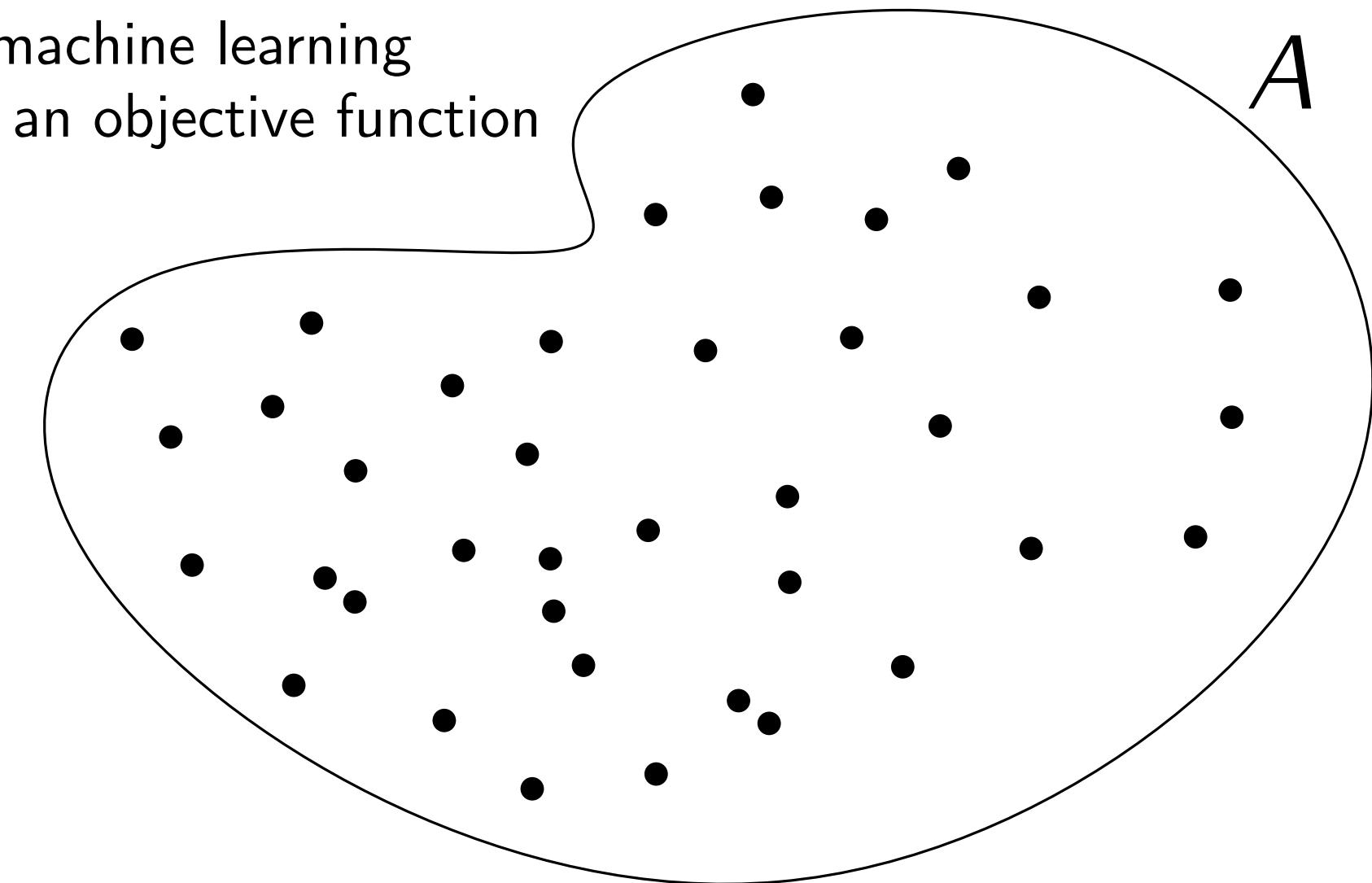
Theorem. The number of surjective functions $A \rightarrow B$ is given by

$$\sum_{r=0}^{|B|} (-1)^r \binom{|B|}{r} (|B| - r)^{|A|}$$



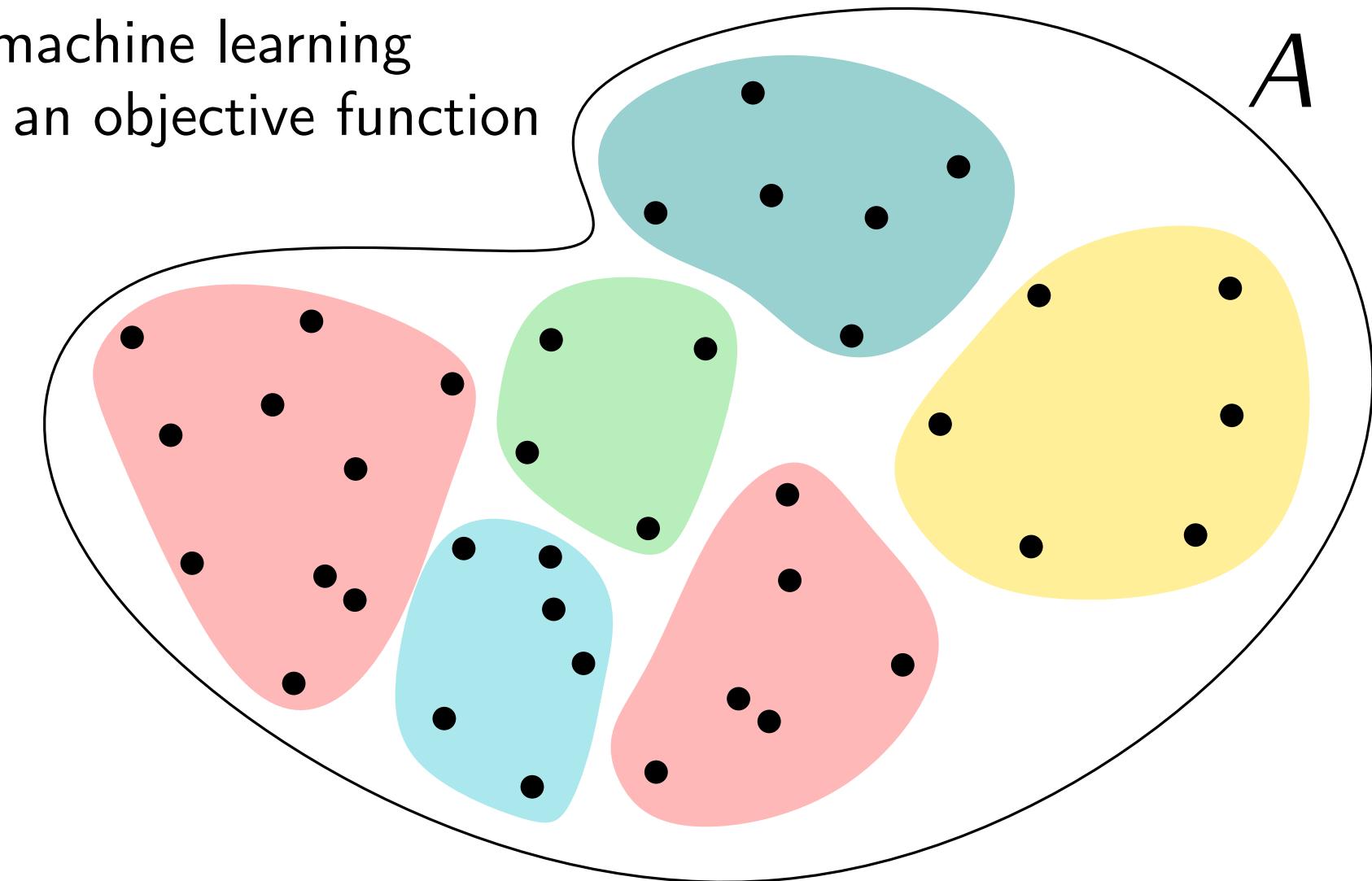
Clustering is an important problem in data science/machine learning

Goal: find a clustering of the points that minimizes an objective function



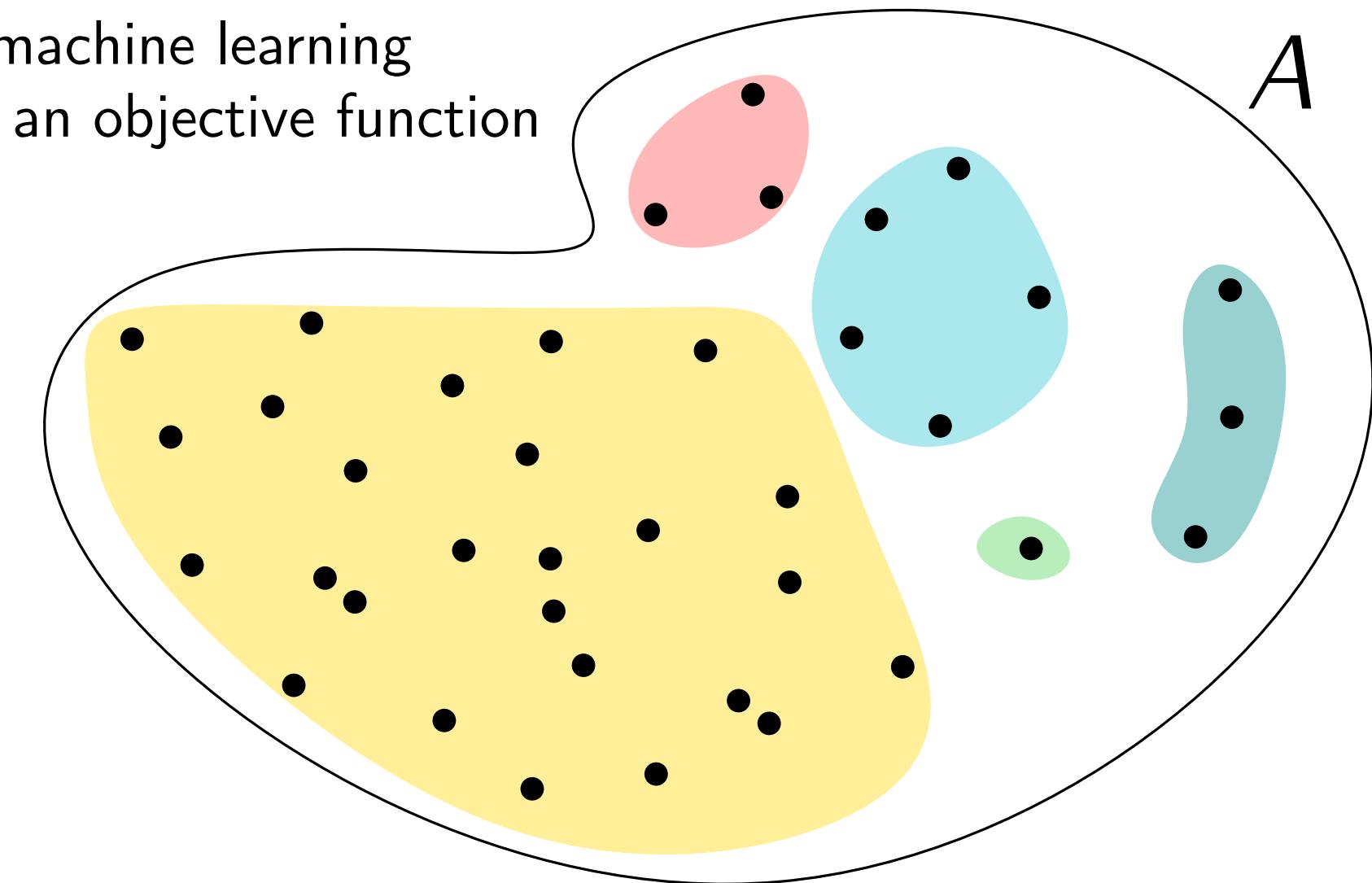
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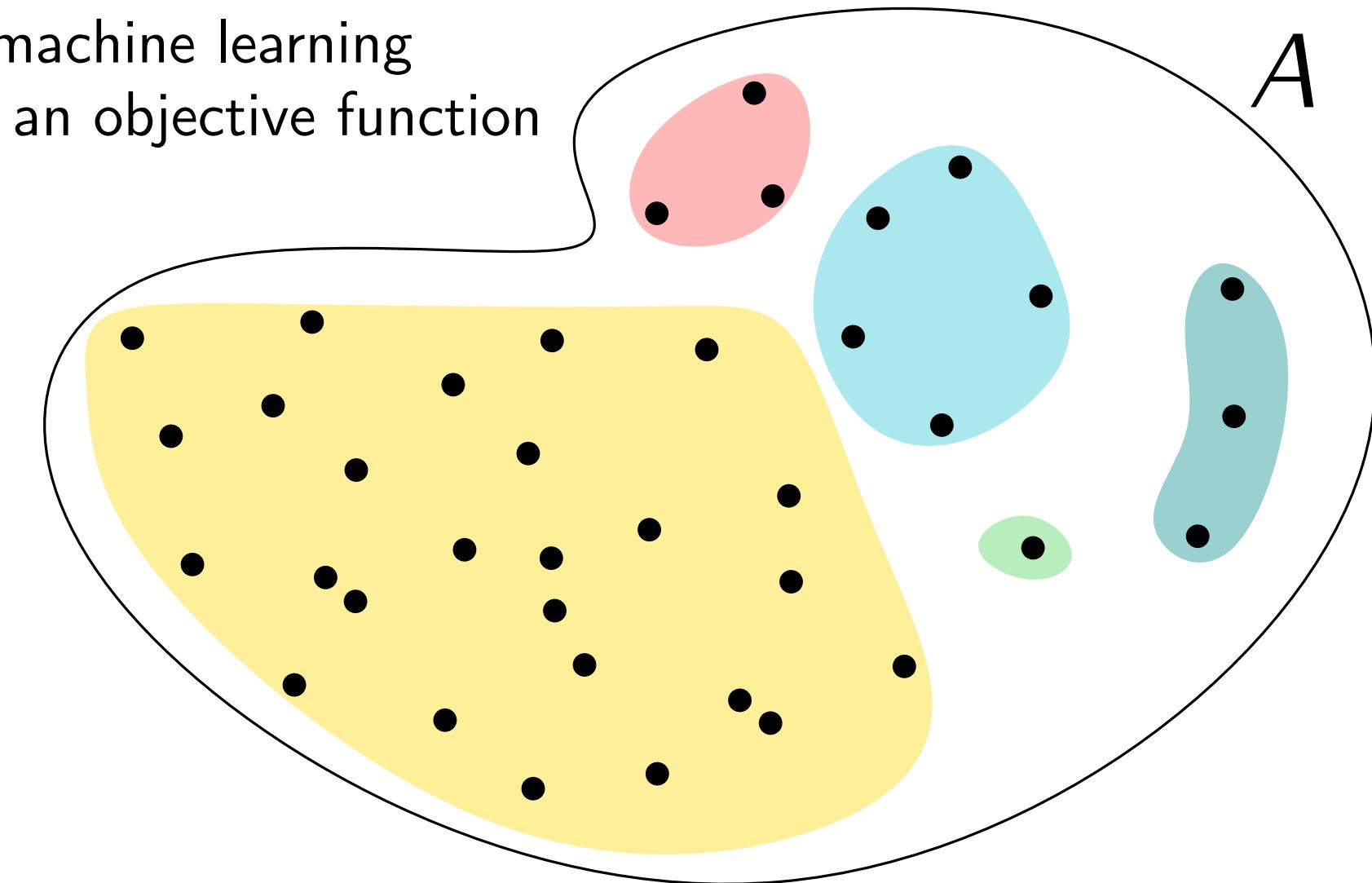
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for clustering in S:
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Counting partitions

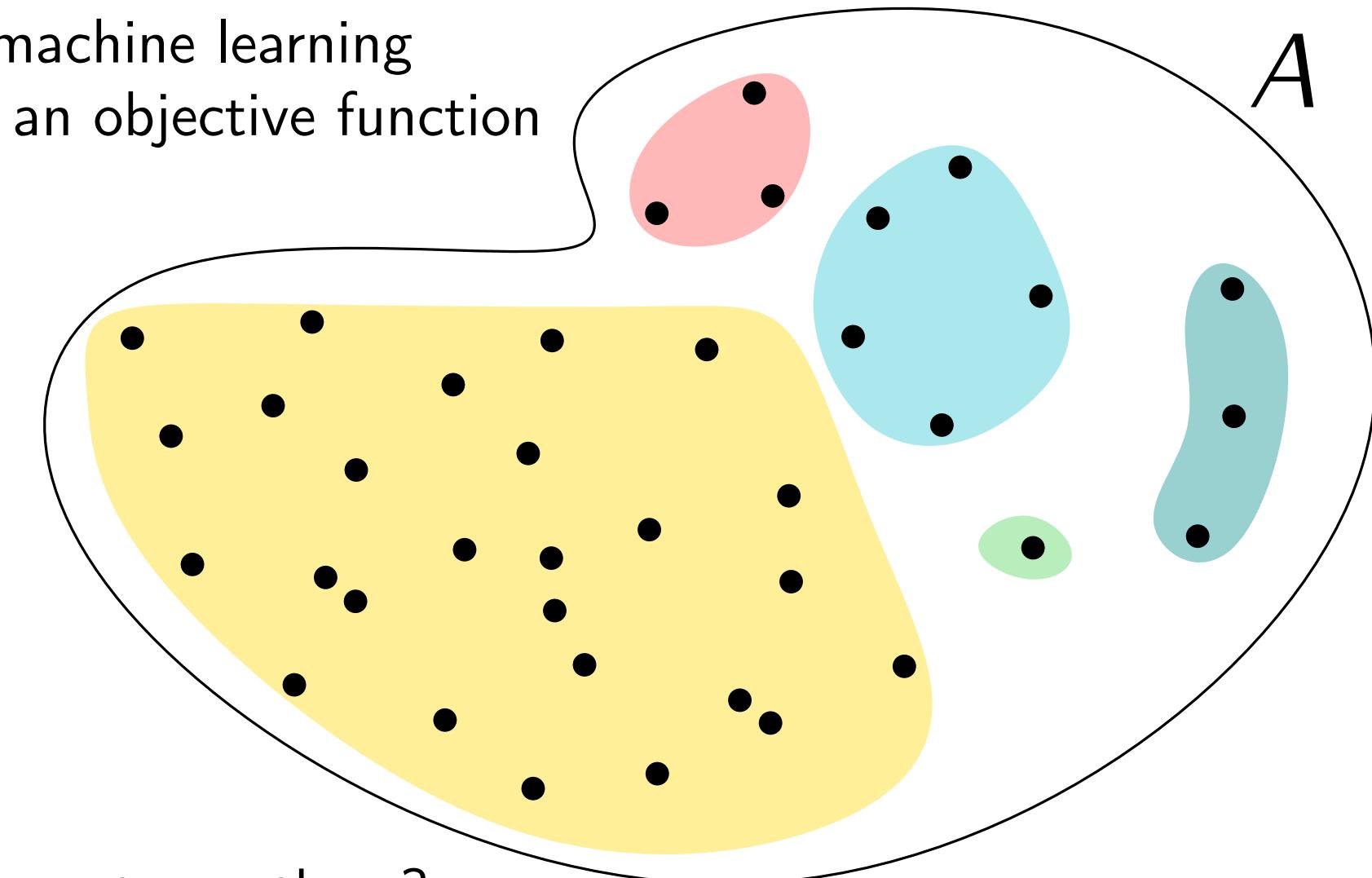
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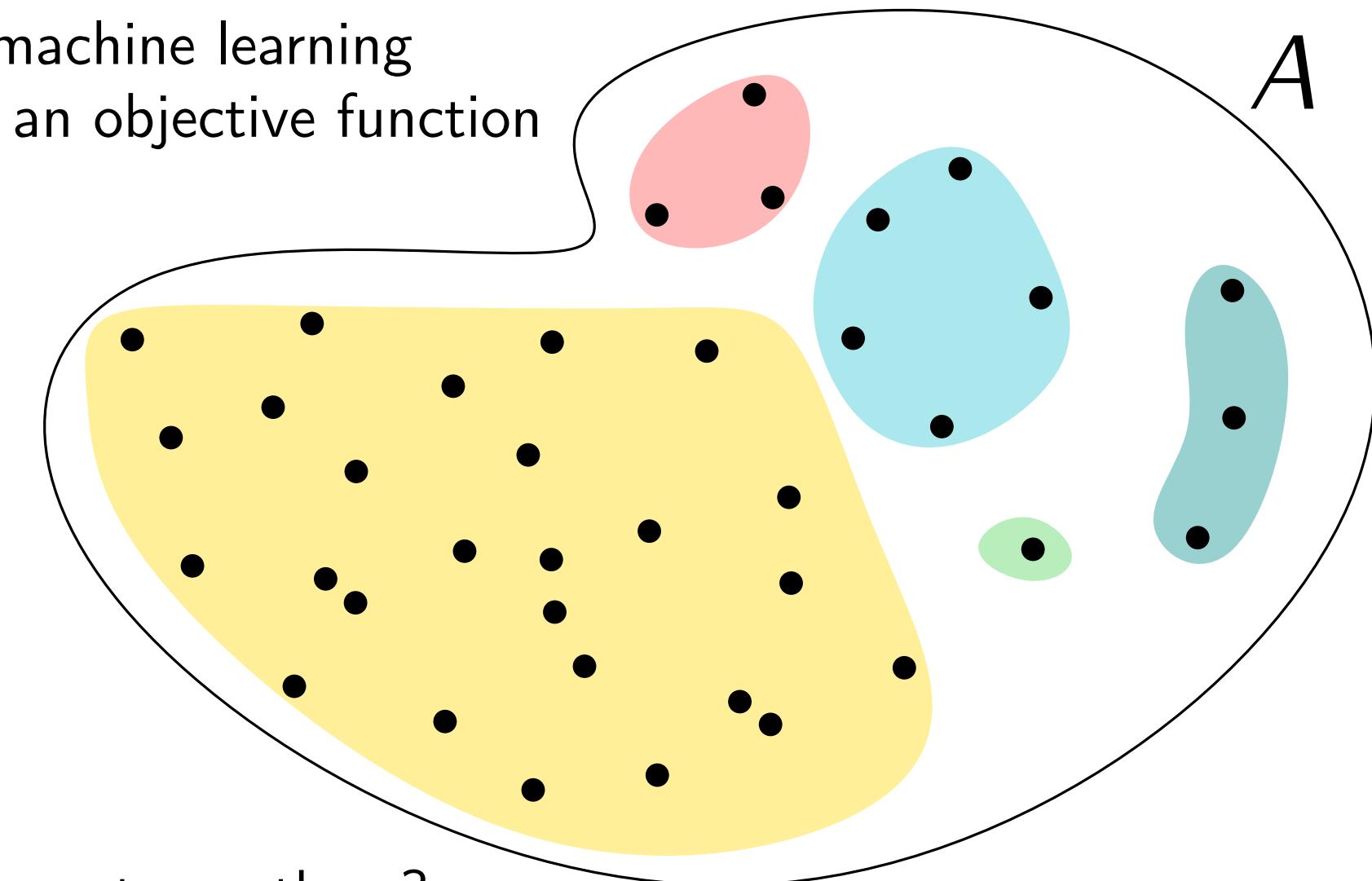
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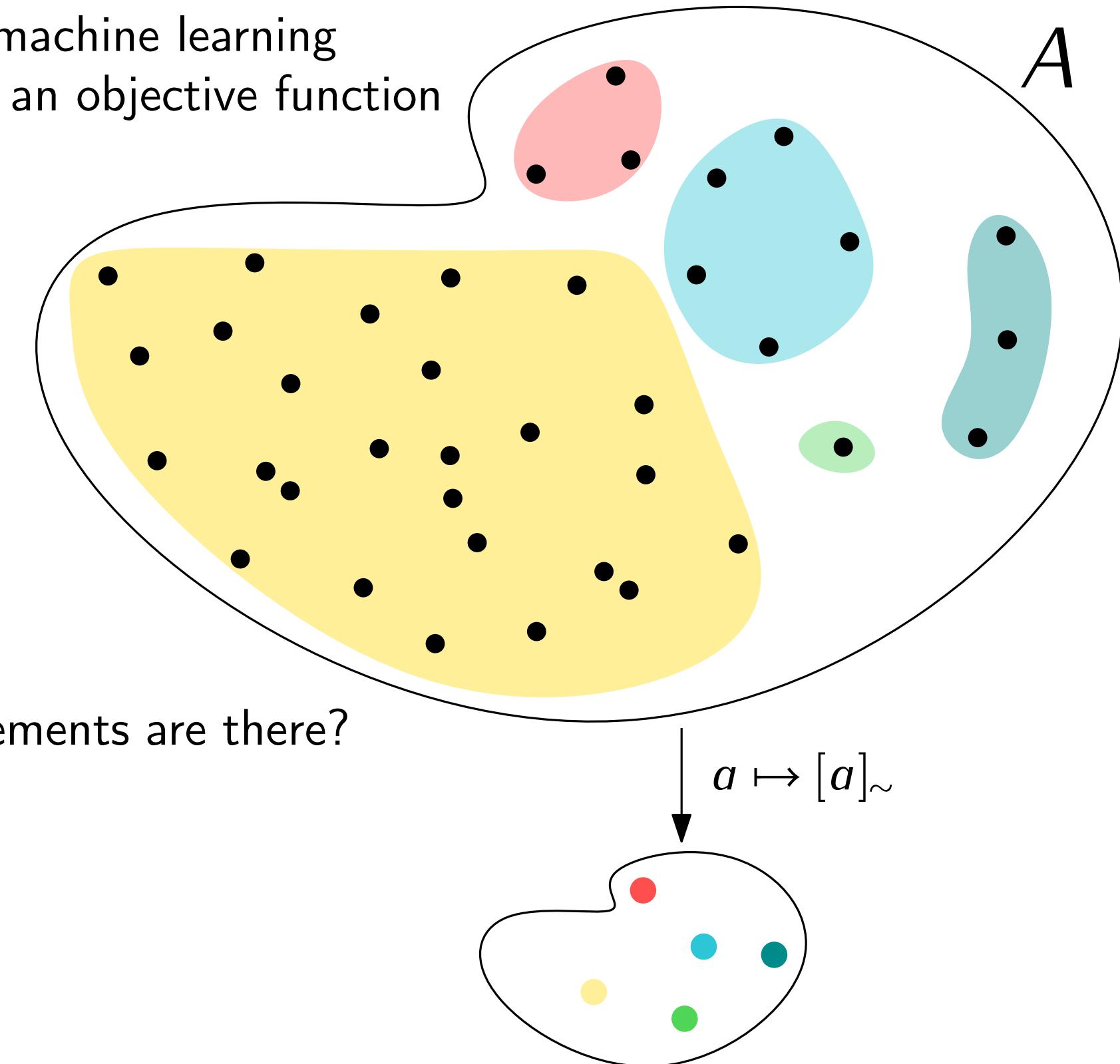
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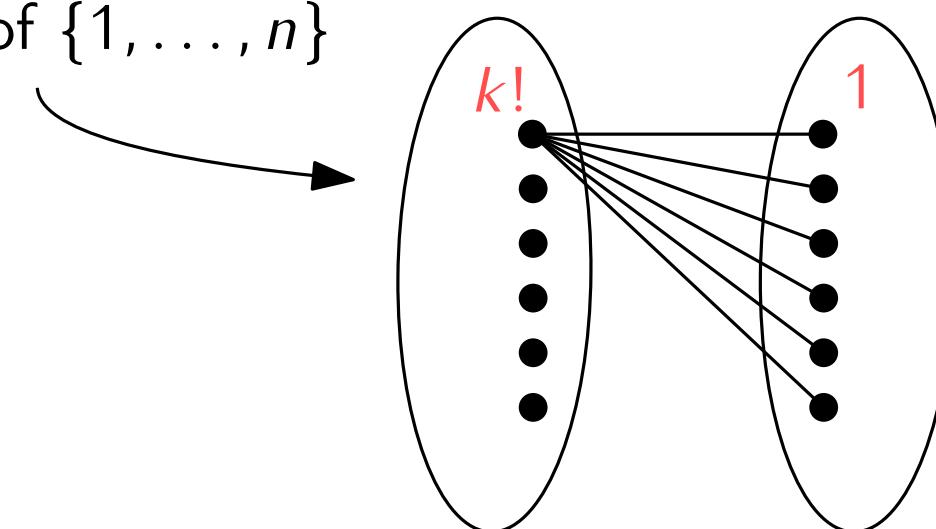
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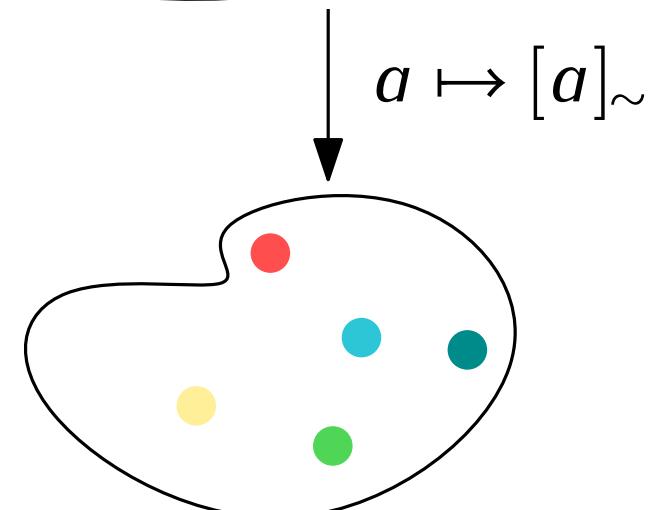
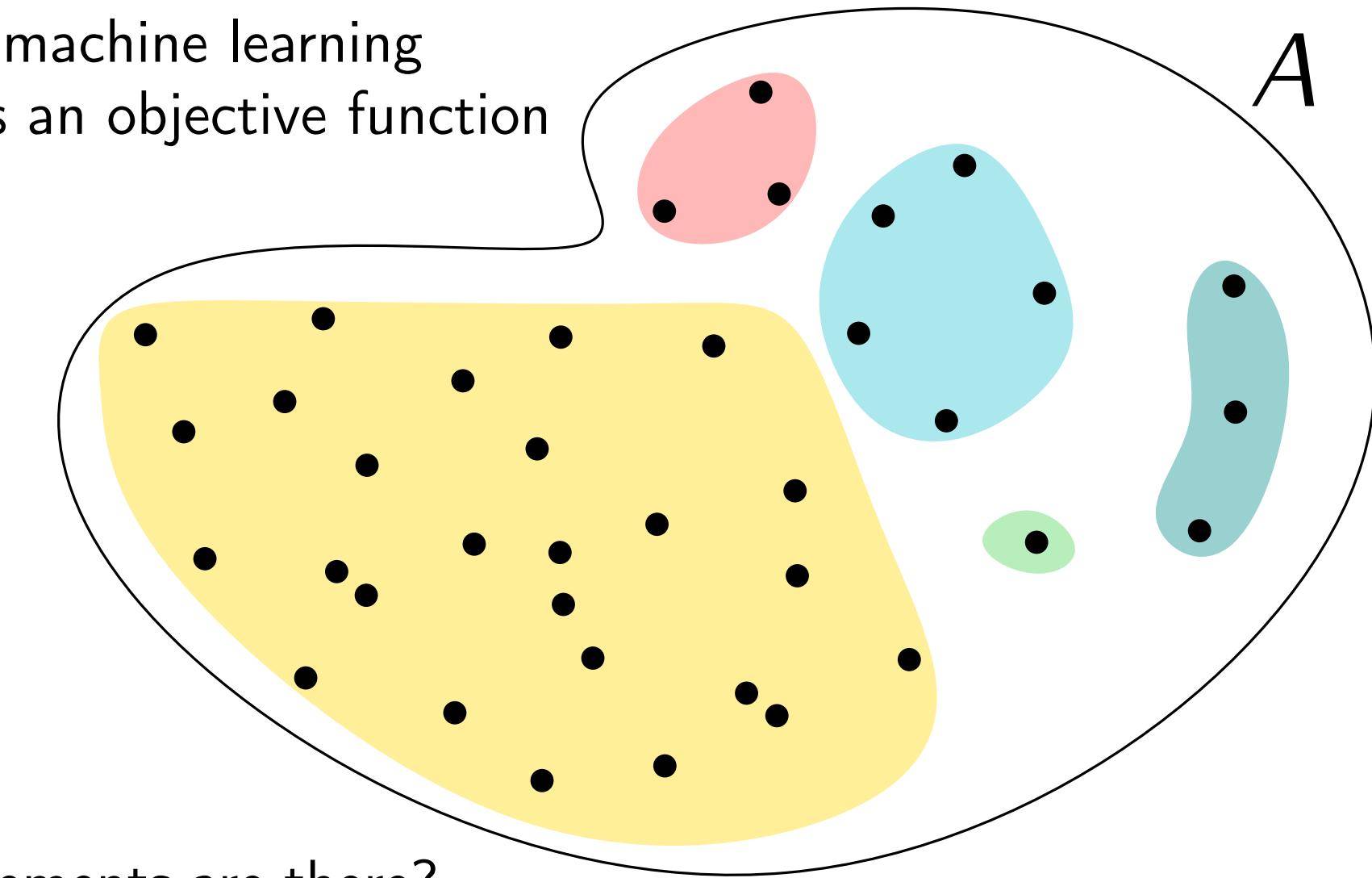
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partitions of $\{1, \dots, n\}$
in k parts



surjective
functions



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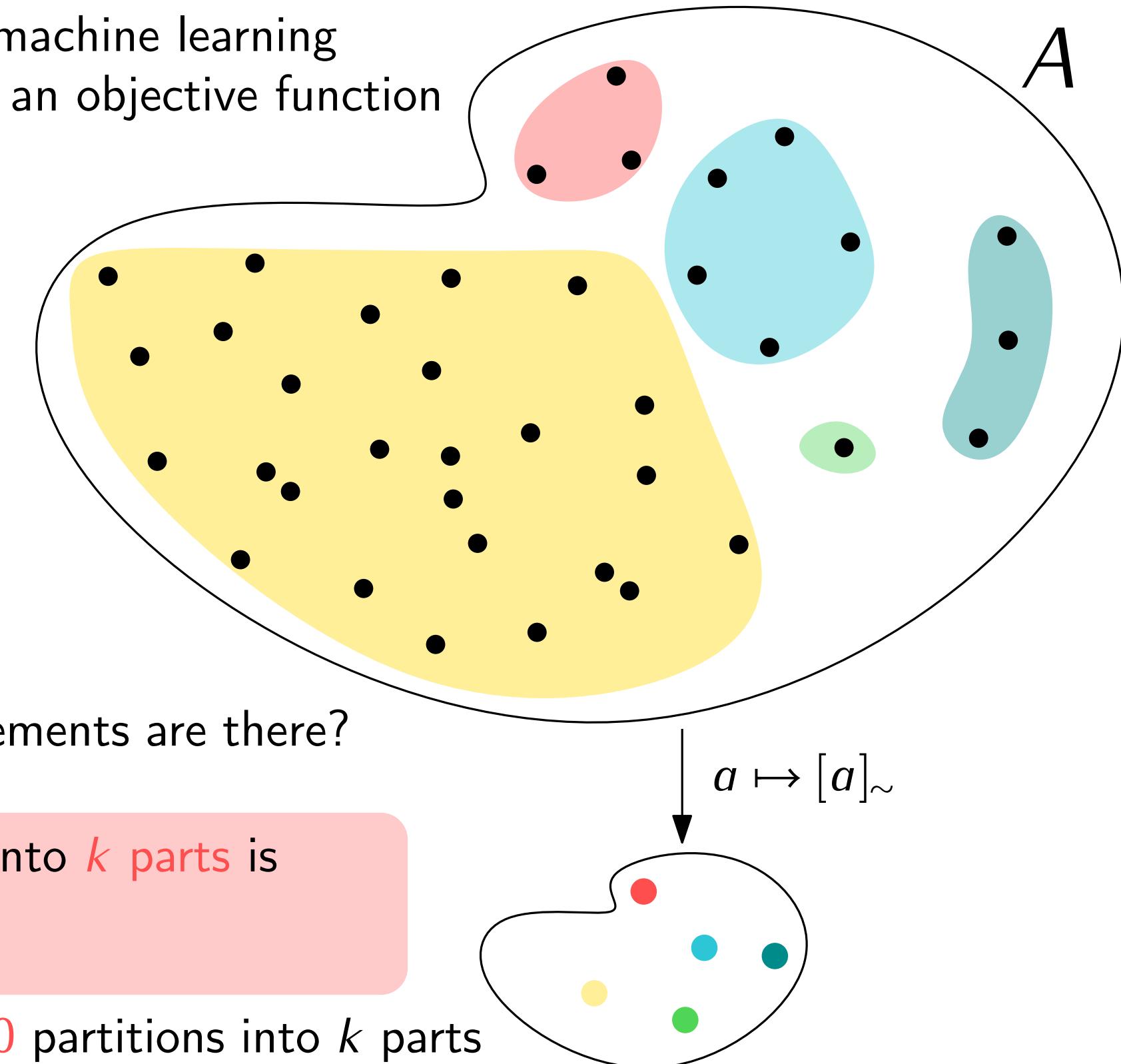
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Theorem. The number of **partitions** of $\{1, \dots, n\}$ into k parts is

$$\frac{1}{k!} \sum_{r=0}^k (-1)^r \binom{k}{r} (k-r)^n$$

$n = 39, k = 5 \rightsquigarrow 1817478286796884221993319200$ partitions into k parts



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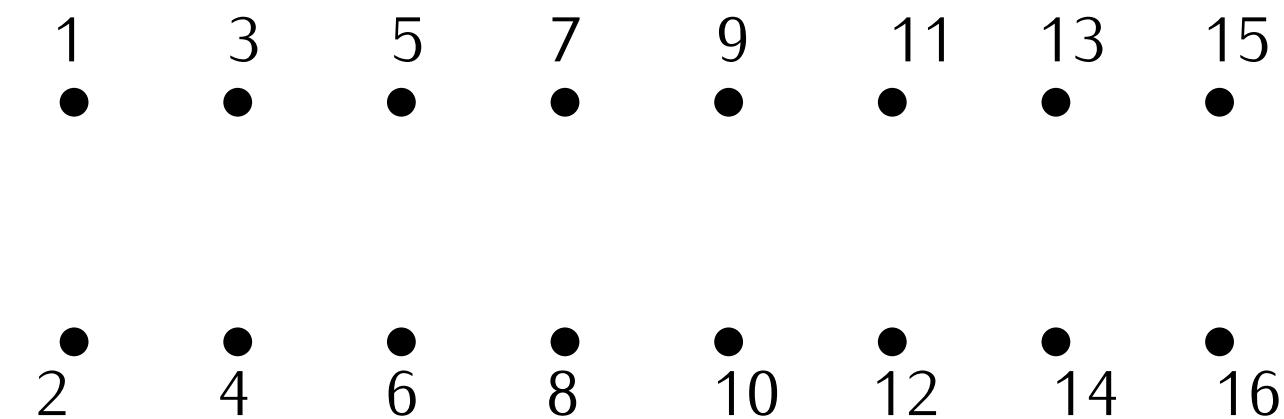
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Example. For any 9 numbers a_1, \dots, a_9 from $\{1, \dots, 16\}$, two numbers are at distance exactly 2.



Theorem. Let $r \in \mathbb{N}$. There exists $n \in \mathbb{N}$ such that for every symmetric relation $R \subseteq A^2$, if $|A| \geq n$, there exist $a_1, \dots, a_r \in A$ distinct such that either:

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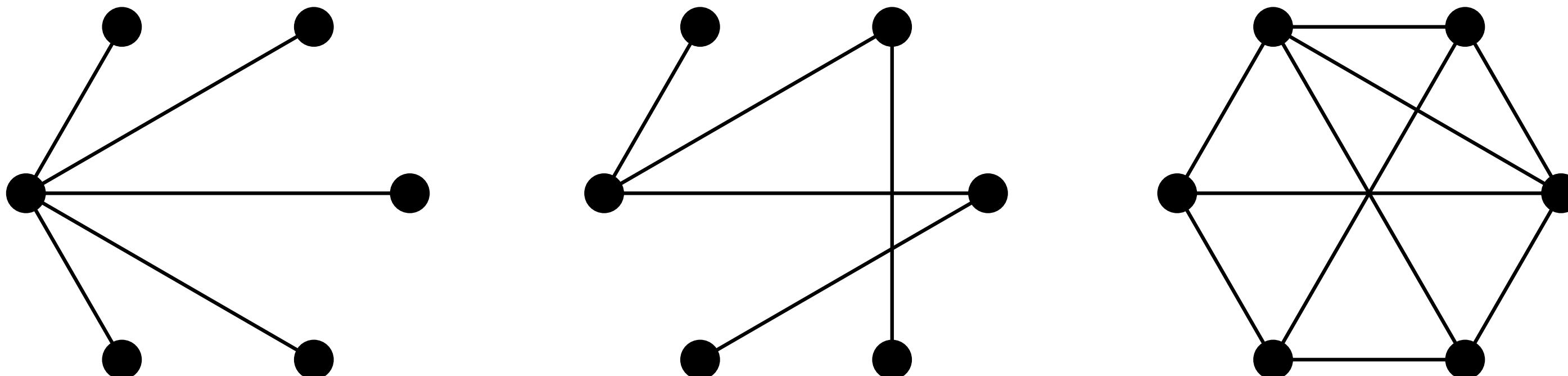
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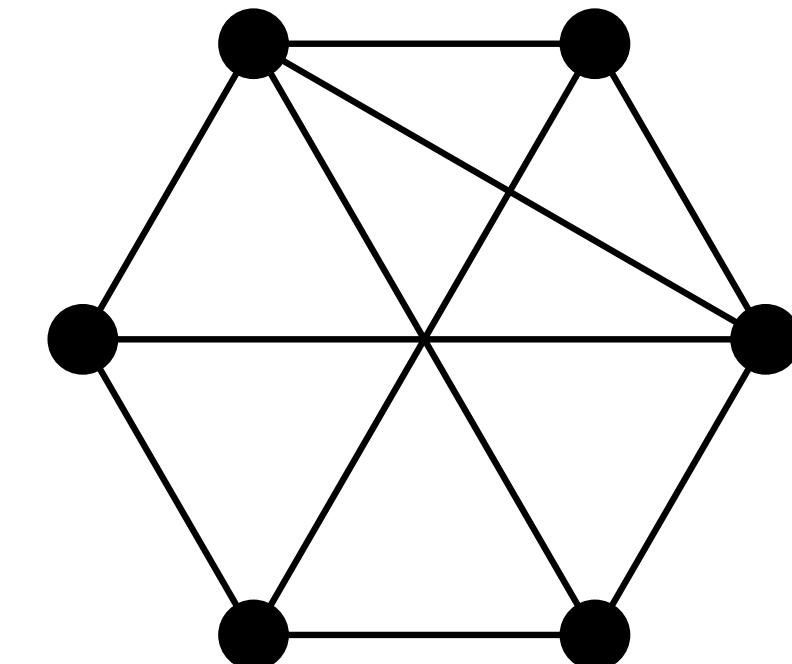
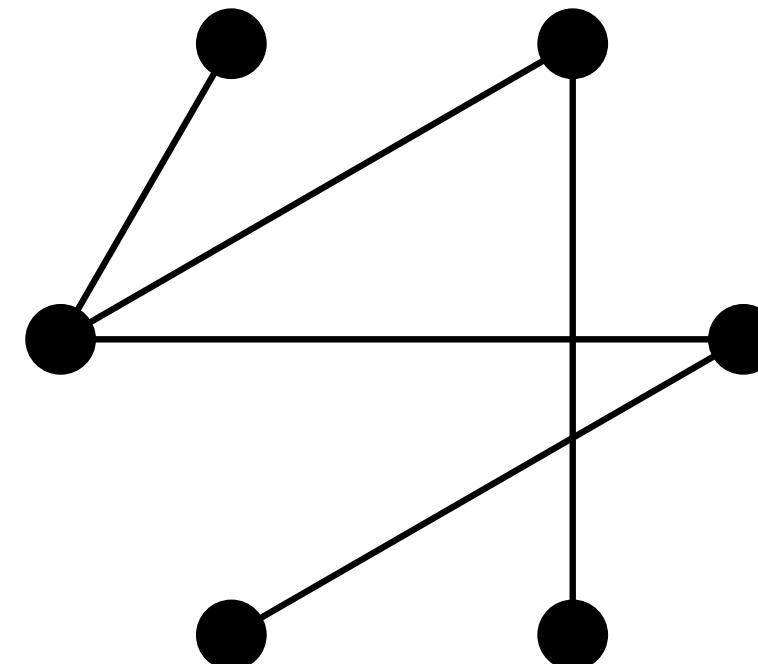
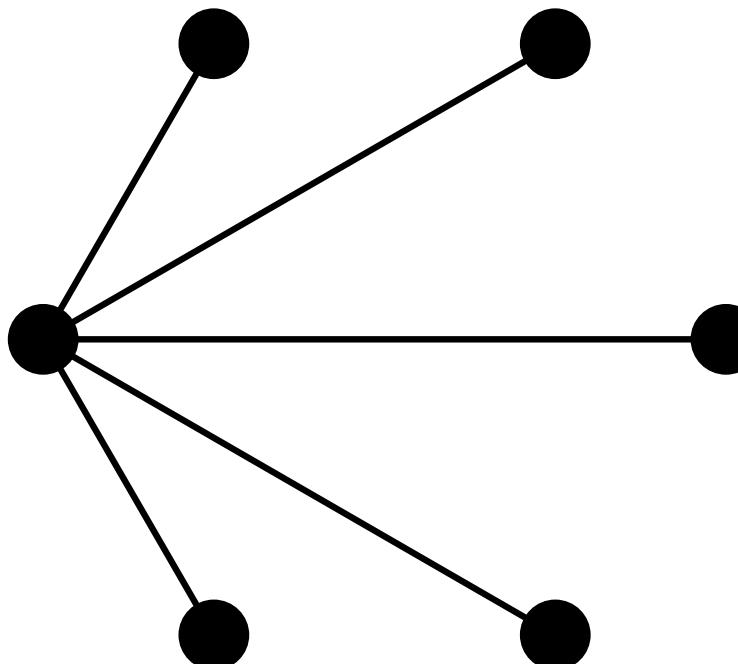
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For $r = 4$, $n = 18$ is enough

For $r = 5$, nobody knows what n is!

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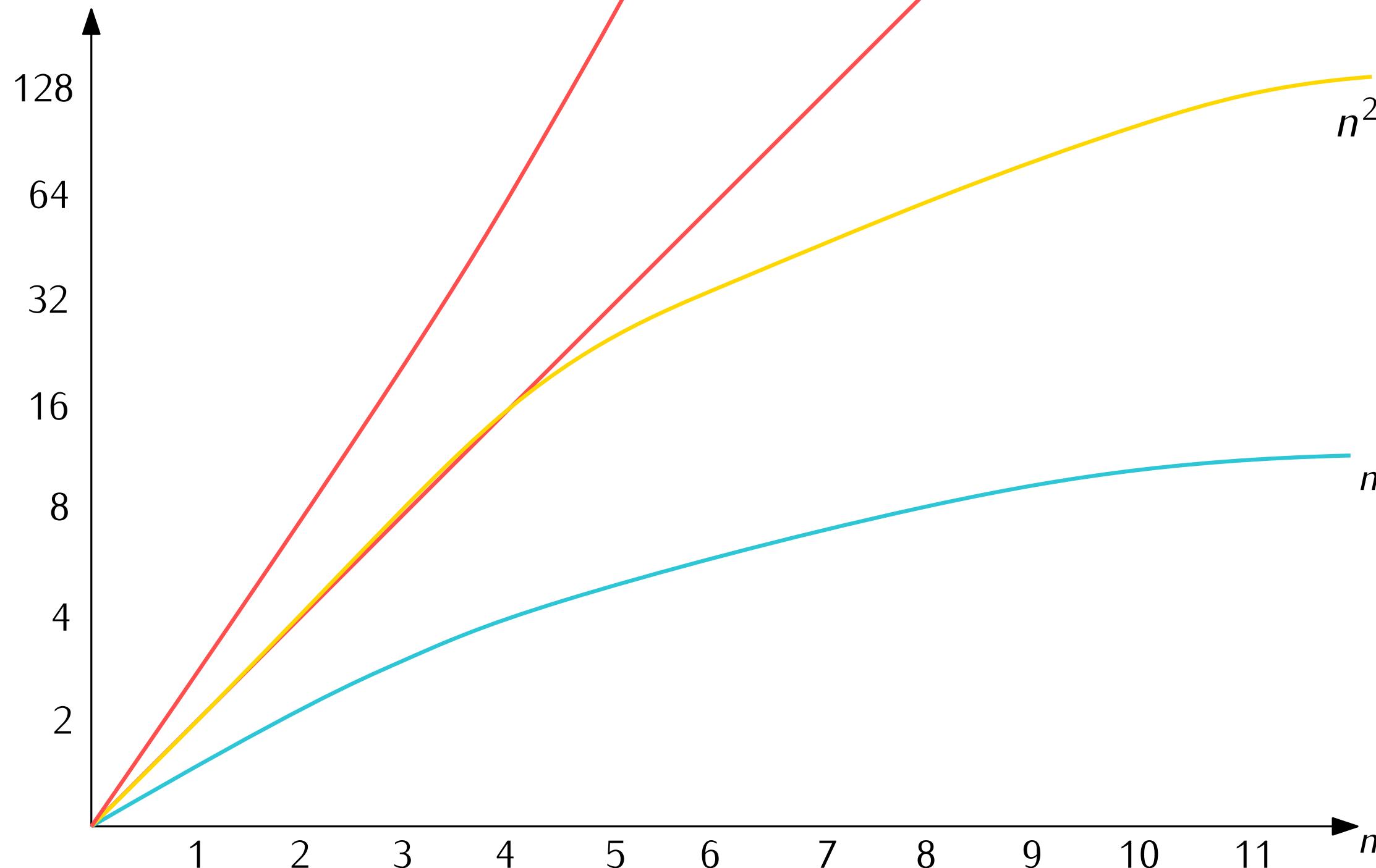
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No replacement	$n^{\underline{k}}$	$\frac{n!}{k!(n-k)!}$

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(from a set of size n to a set of size k)

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Take away message:

$O(n^k)$ is “ok” for algorithms if k small

Don’t ever try $O(k^n)$, even if k is small

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- How to use double counting
- The inclusion-exclusion principle for 2 and 3 sets
- How to apply the pigeonhole principle