



# Natural Graph Networks

Pim De Haan, Taco Cohen, Max Welling (NIPS 2020)

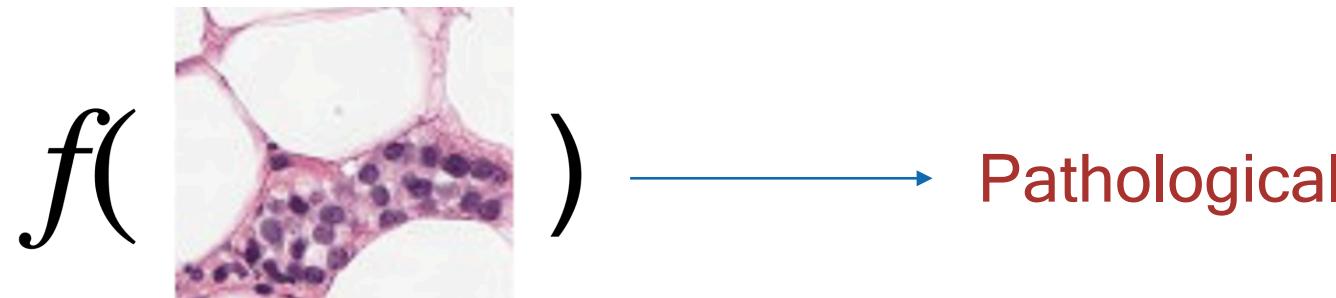
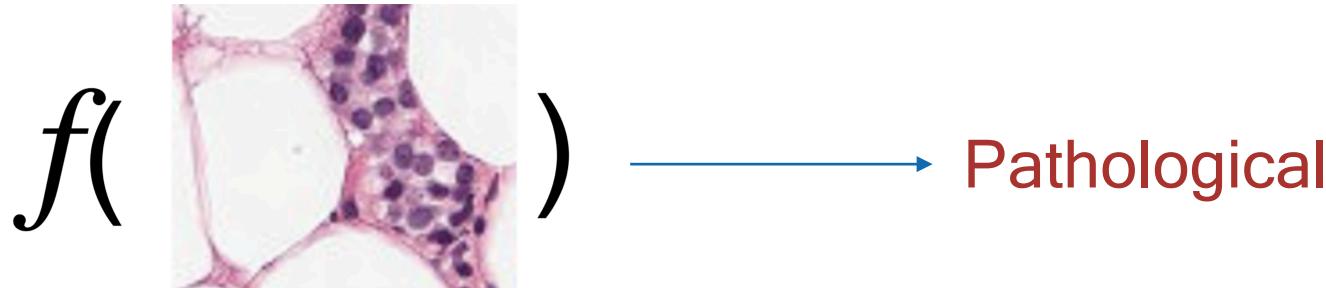
Presented by Piersilvio De Bartolomeis, ETH Zürich



# Motivation

## How powerful are GNNs?

# What is Invariance?



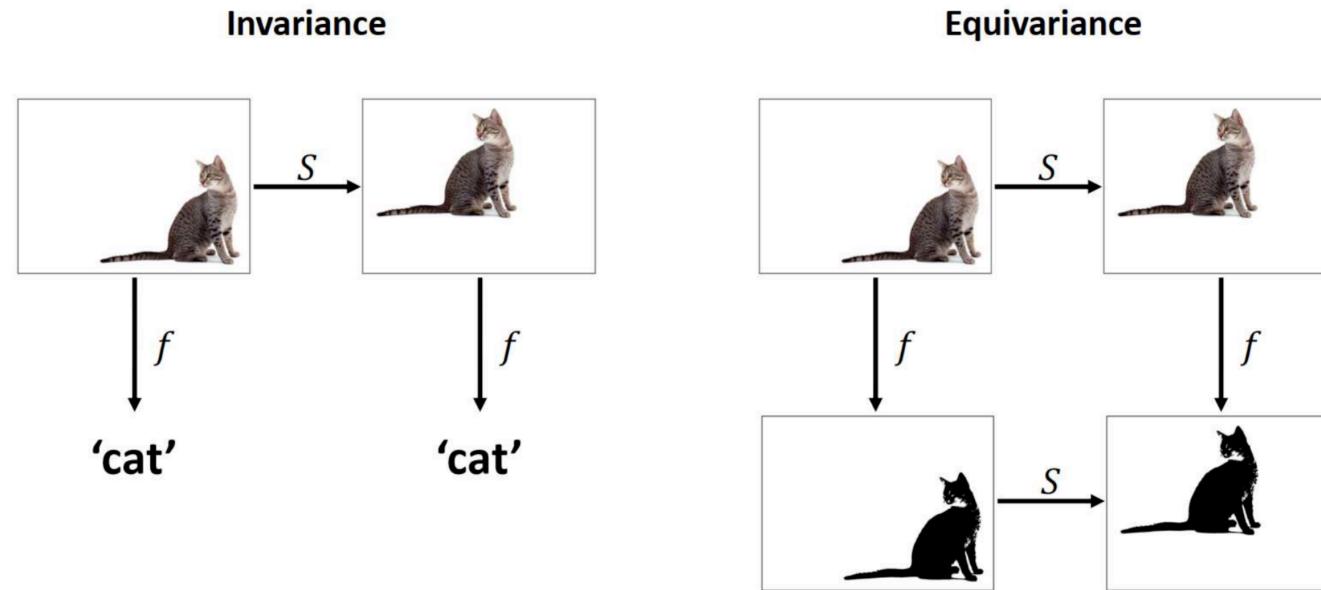
For any symmetry operation  $S$ :  $f(x) = f \circ S(x)$

# The Picasso problem



Invariance is too restrictive!

# Invariance vs Equivariance



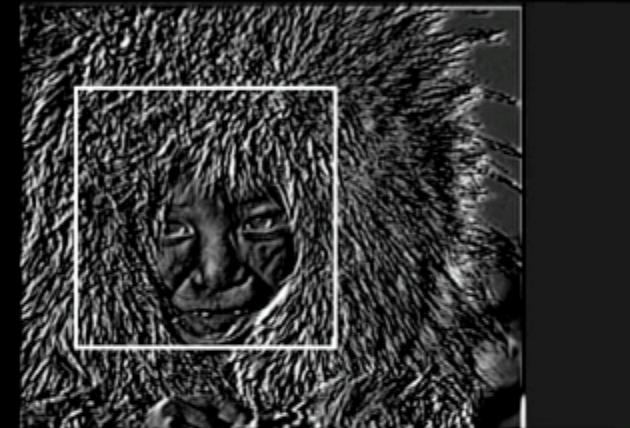
- Invariance —→ the output stays constant no matter how the input is transformed
  - $f(x) = f \circ S(x)$
- Equivariance —→ the output undergoes the exact same transformation as the input
  - $S \circ f(x) = f \circ S(x)$

# Existing CNNs: Translation Equivariance

Input

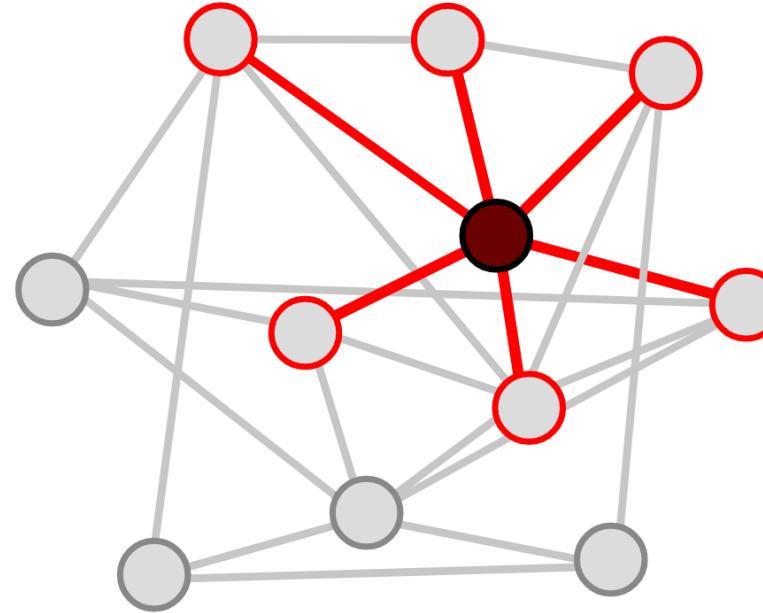
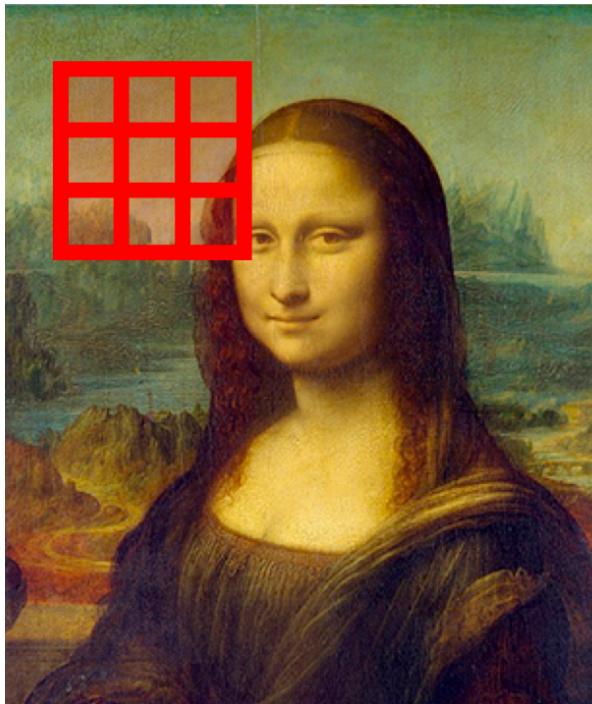


Features



Windowed  
view

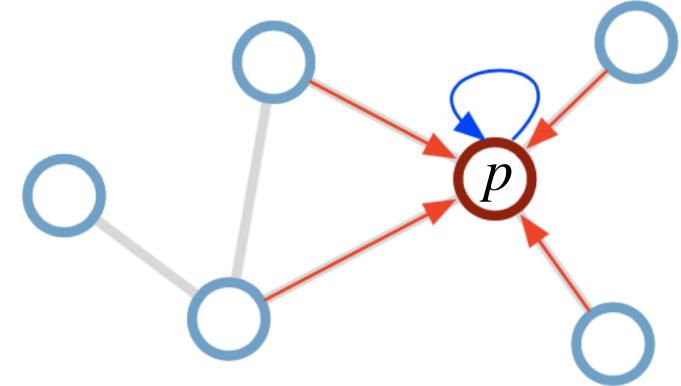
# Images vs Graphs



- Constant number of neighbours
- Fixed ordering of neighbours
- Translation invariance
- Different number of neighbours
- No ordering of neighbours
- Permutation invariance

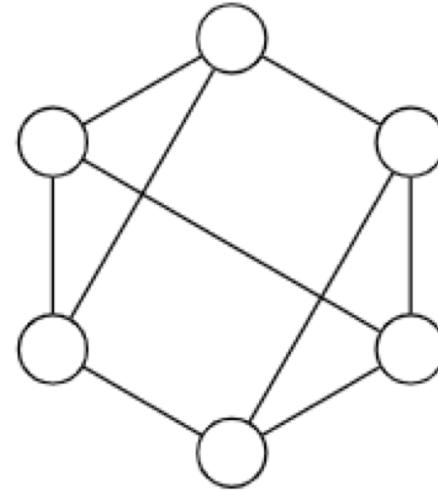
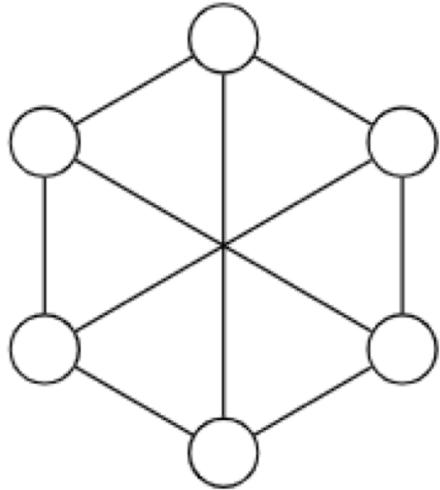
# Local Invariant Graph Networks (LIGNs)

$$K(v_p) = \sum_{(p,q) \in E} W \cdot v_q$$



- $K(v_p)$  is invariant under a permutation of its neighbours
- $W$  is a single matrix used on each edge of any graph

# Limitations of LIGNs

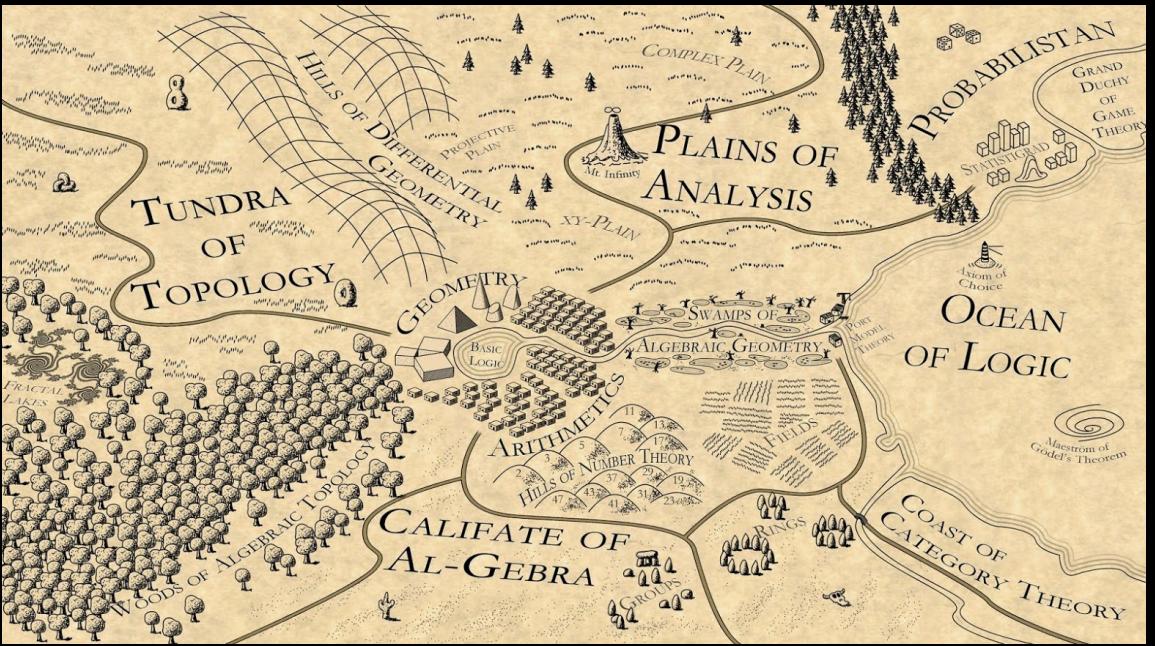


Local invariant graph networks cannot discriminate between these two graphs!

# The question arises..

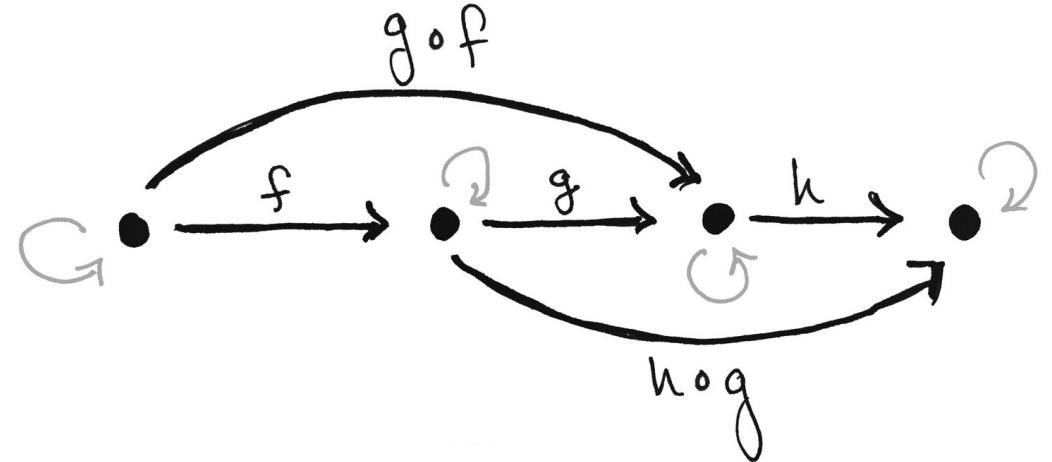
Can we design maximally expressive graph networks that are  
equivariant to node permutations?

# Introduction to Category Theory

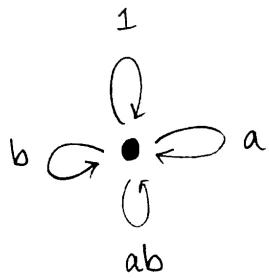


# What is a Category?

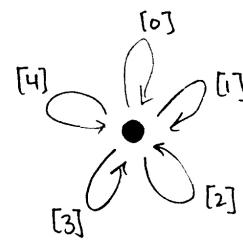
- A category  $\mathbf{C}$  consists of three elements:
  - A collection  $Ob(\mathbf{C})$  of objects
  - A set of morphisms  $\mathbf{C}(c, d)$  for every pair of objects  $(c, d) \in Ob(\mathbf{C})$
  - A composition rule: whenever the codomain of one morphism matches the domain of another, there is a morphism that is their composition, i.e. given  $x \xrightarrow{f} y$  and  $y \xrightarrow{g} z$  there is a morphism  $x \xrightarrow{g \circ f} z$
- That satisfy the following properties:
  - Each object  $x \in Ob(\mathbf{C})$  has an identity morphism  $x \xrightarrow{id_x} x$
  - The composition is associative  $(h \circ g) \circ f = h \circ (g \circ f)$  whenever  $x \xrightarrow{f} y \xrightarrow{g} z \xrightarrow{h} w$



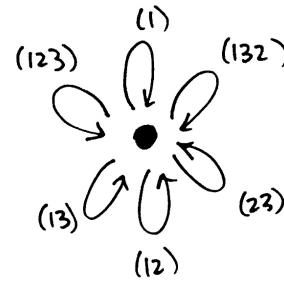
# Every group $G$ can be viewed as a category



$BK_4$



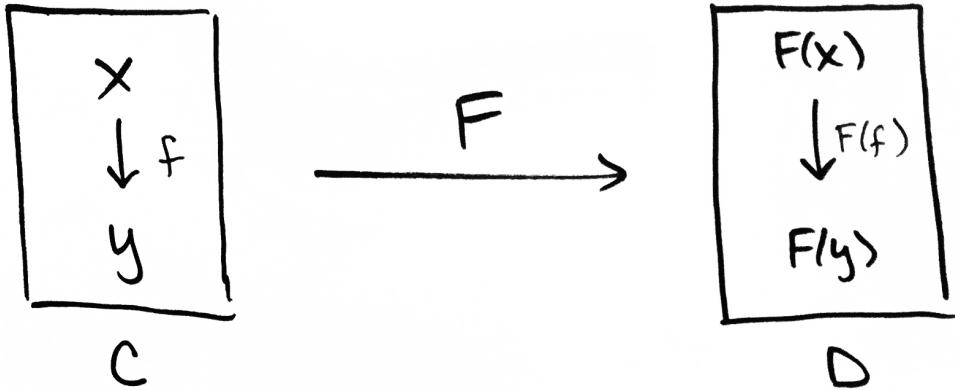
$B\mathbb{Z}_5$



$BS_3$

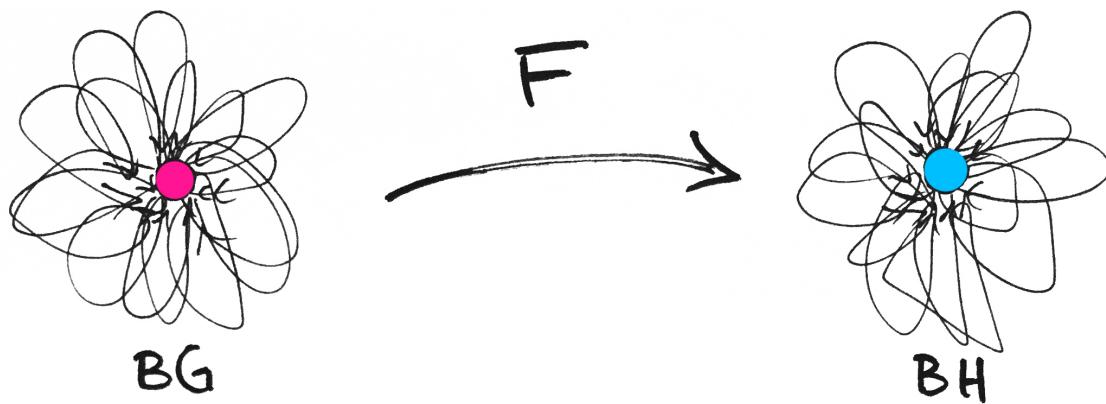
- A single object denoted by  $\bullet$
- A morphism  $\bullet \xrightarrow{g} \bullet$  for each element  $g \in G$
- Composition holds since  $G$  is closed under the group operation
- The group identity  $e \in G$  serves as the identity morphism for  $\bullet$
- Associativity holds because the group operation is associative

# What is a Functor?



- A functor  $F : \mathbf{C} \rightarrow \mathbf{D}$  consists of:
  - An object  $F(x) \in Ob(\mathbf{D})$  for every object  $x \in Ob(\mathbf{C})$
  - A morphism  $F(x) \xrightarrow{F(f)} F(y)$  for every morphism  $x \xrightarrow{f} y$
- That satisfy the following properties:
  - $F$  respects composition, i.e.  $F(g \circ f) = F(g) \circ F(f)$
  - $F$  sends identities to identities, i.e.  $F(id_x) = id_{F(x)}$

# A Functor between groups



- $F : BG \longrightarrow BH$
- It sends the single object of  $BG$  to the single object of  $BH$
- It sends any morphism  $\xrightarrow{g}$  to a morphism  $\xrightarrow{F(g)}$
- In particular, the identity of  $BG$  is sent to the identity of  $BH$
- It is precisely a group homomorphism from group  $G$  to group  $H$ !

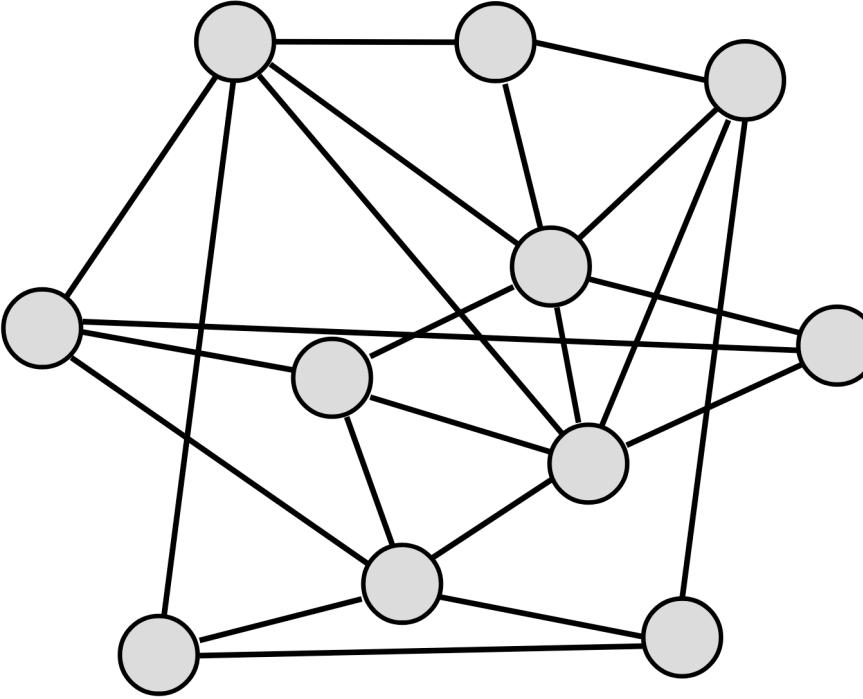
# What is a Natural Transformation?

- Given two functors  $F$  and  $G : \mathbf{C} \rightarrow \mathbf{D}$ , from natural transformation  $\eta : F \Rightarrow G$  consists of:
  - A morphism  $F(x) \xrightarrow{\eta_x} G(x)$  for each object in category  $\mathbf{C}$
  - $\eta$  is the totality of all morphisms:  $\eta = (\eta_x)_{x \in Ob(\mathbf{C})}$
- That satisfies the following property:
  - Whenever  $x \xrightarrow{f} y$  is a morphism in  $\mathbf{C}$ :
    - $G(f) \circ \eta_x = \eta_y \circ F(f)$

$$\begin{array}{ccc} F(x) & \xrightarrow{\eta_x} & G(x) \\ F(f) \downarrow & & \downarrow G(f) \\ F(y) & \xrightarrow{\eta_y} & G(y) \end{array}$$

# Global Natural Networks

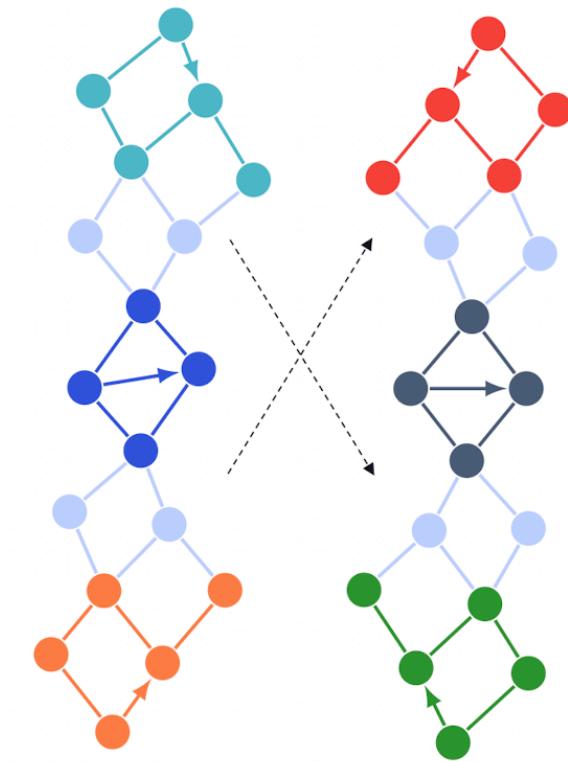
# Graphs



- A finite set of nodes:  $V = \{1, \dots, n\}$
- A set of edges:  $E = \{(i, j) : i, j \in V\}$

# Graph Isomorphisms

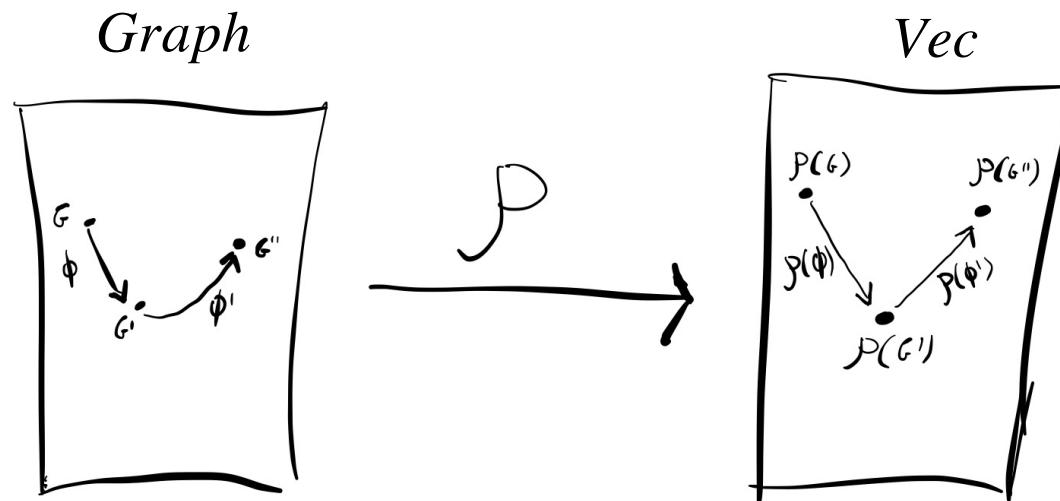
- An isomorphism  $\phi : G \rightarrow G'$  is a mapping  $\phi : V(G) \rightarrow V(G')$  that satisfies:
  - $(i, j) \in E(G) \iff (\phi(i), \phi(j)) \in E(G')$
  - Preserves edges!
- An isomorphism from a graph to itself: automorphism or symmetry!



# Graph feature space $\rho$

- Associates:
  - To each graph  $G$  a vector space  $V_G = \rho(G)$
  - To each graph isomorphism  $\phi : G \rightarrow G'$  an invertible linear map  $\rho(\phi) : V_G \rightarrow V_{G'}$
- Such that composition is preserved:
  - $\rho(\phi \circ \phi') = \rho(\phi) \circ \rho(\phi')$

The graph feature space is a functor:  $\rho : Graph \longrightarrow Vec$

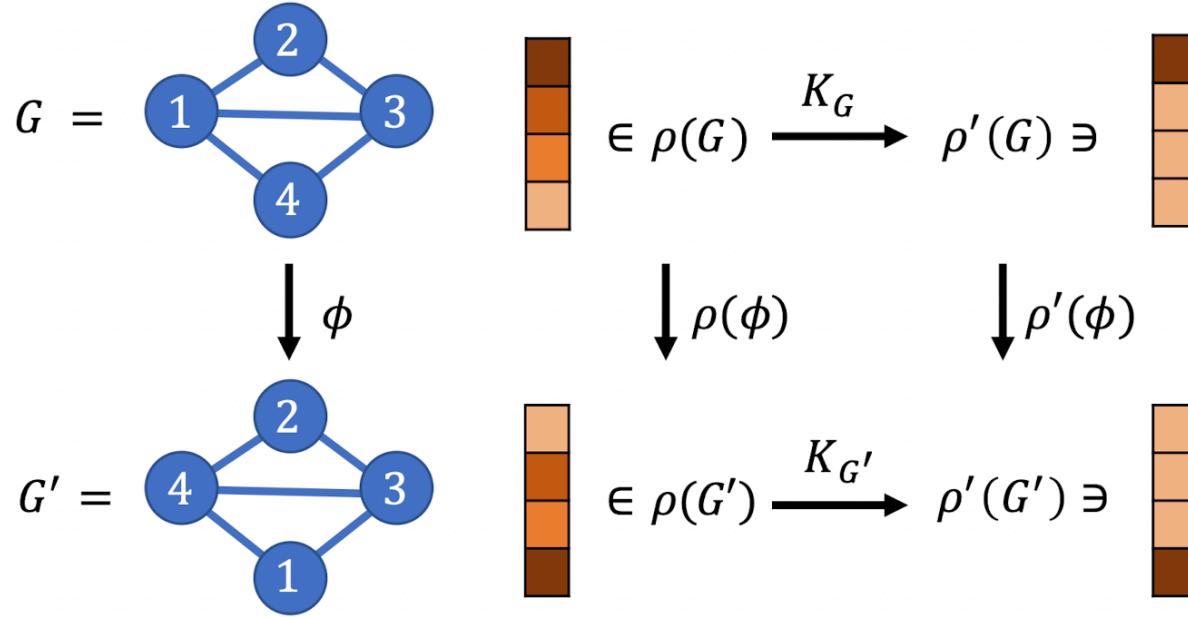


# Global Natural Network Layer

- Given two graph feature spaces  $\rho, \rho' : \text{Graph} \rightarrow \text{Vec}$
- The GNN layer is a natural transformation between these two functors
  - Consisting of a different map  $K_G$  for each graph  $G$

$$\begin{array}{ccc} & & \\ K : \rho & \Longrightarrow & \rho' \\ & & \\ \rho(G) & \xrightarrow{K_G} & \rho'(G) \\ \downarrow \rho(\phi) & & \downarrow \rho'(\phi) \\ \rho(G') & \xrightarrow{K_{G'}} & \rho'(G') \end{array}$$

# Global Natural Network Layer



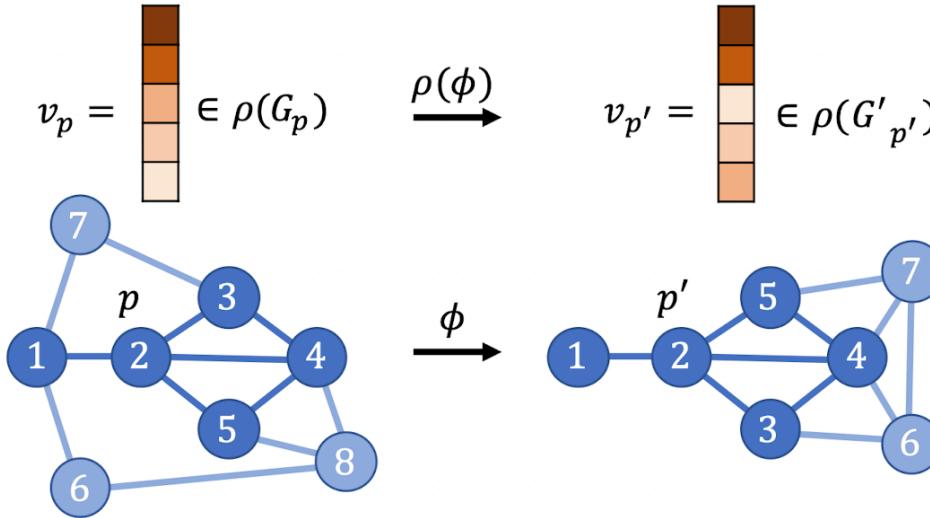
- $\rho(G) = \rho(G') = \mathbb{R}^4$
- $\rho'(\phi) \circ K_G = K_{G'} \circ \rho(\phi) \implies K_{G'} = \rho'(\phi) \circ K_G \circ \rho(\phi)^{-1} \implies$  weight sharing for isomorphisms
- $\rho'(\phi) \circ K_G = K_G \circ \rho(\phi) \implies$  linear constraint for automorphisms

# Limitations of Global Natural Networks

Global computations on entire graph is intractable!

# Local Natural Networks

# Category of node neighbourhoods



- Define a category **C** of node neighbourhood:
  - $Ob(\mathbf{C}) = V$
  - For each node  $p \in V$  associate a neighbourhood  $G_p$
  - Morphisms of this category are isomorphisms between node neighbourhoods

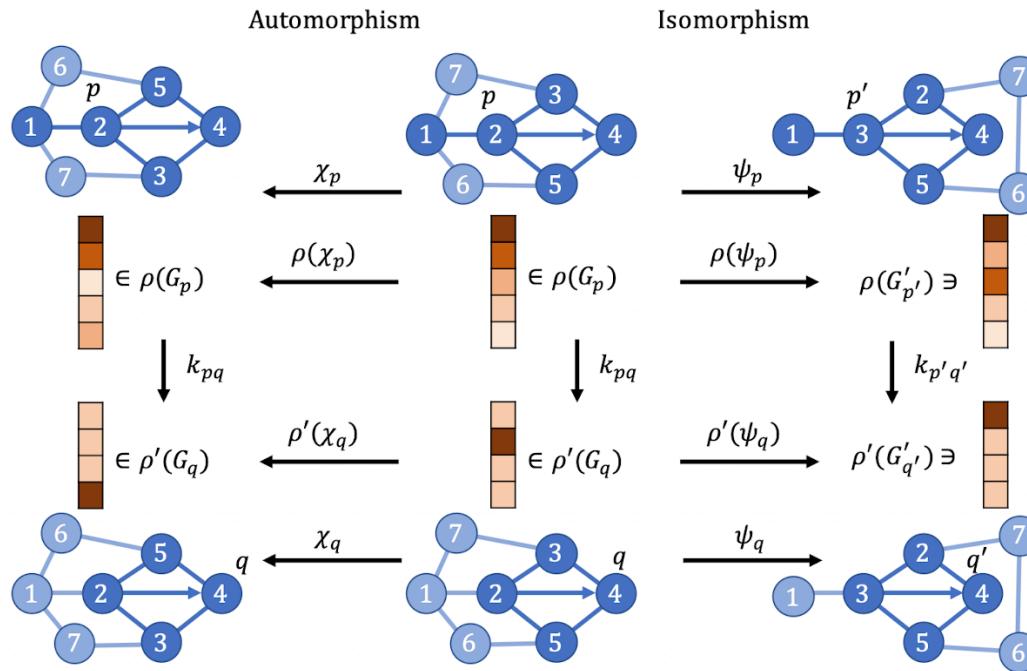
The local feature space  $\rho : \mathbf{C} \longrightarrow \mathit{Vec}$  is a functor

# Local Natural Network Layer

- Given two graph feature spaces  $\rho, \rho' : \mathbf{C} \rightarrow \text{Vec}$
- The LNN layer is a natural transformation between
  - $\rho, \rho' : \mathbf{C} \rightarrow \text{Vec}$
  - Consisting of a different map for each node neighbourhood  $G_p$ 
    - $k_p : \rho(G_p) \rightarrow \rho'(G_p)$

$$\rho \implies \rho'$$

# Local Natural Network Layer



# Conclusions

- Invariance limits expressivity
- Equivariance let us learn a broader class of functions
- Treating the graph as a monolithic structure leads to intractable computations
- Restriction to the graph local structure solves the issue

Category theory paves the way towards a mathematical formulation of neural networks

Thank you for your attention!