

Recent Trends and Variants in Diffusion Models

Jia-Wei Liao

Ph.D. Candidate in Computer Science

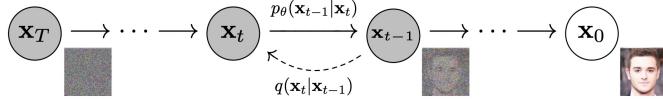
National Taiwan University



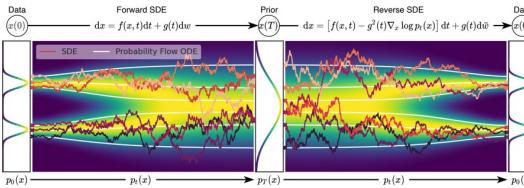
Outline

- Theoretical Foundations: From SDEs to Score-Based Modeling
- Training Objectives and Sampling Mechanisms
- Advanced Extensions: DDIM, Consistency Models, and CTMs

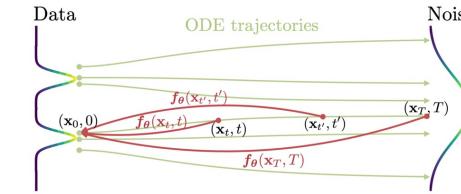
Evolution of Diffusion Models



DDPM [NeurIPS'20]
2020 / 6 (UCB)



Score-based SDE [ICLR'21]
2020 / 11 (Ermon)

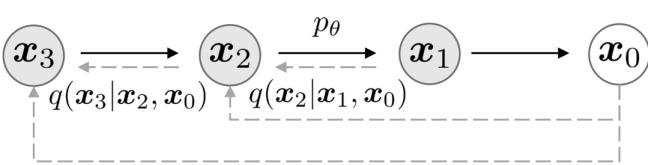


CM [ICML'23]
2023 / 3 (OpenAI)

Flow Matching!



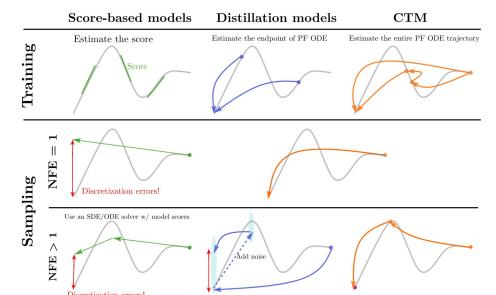
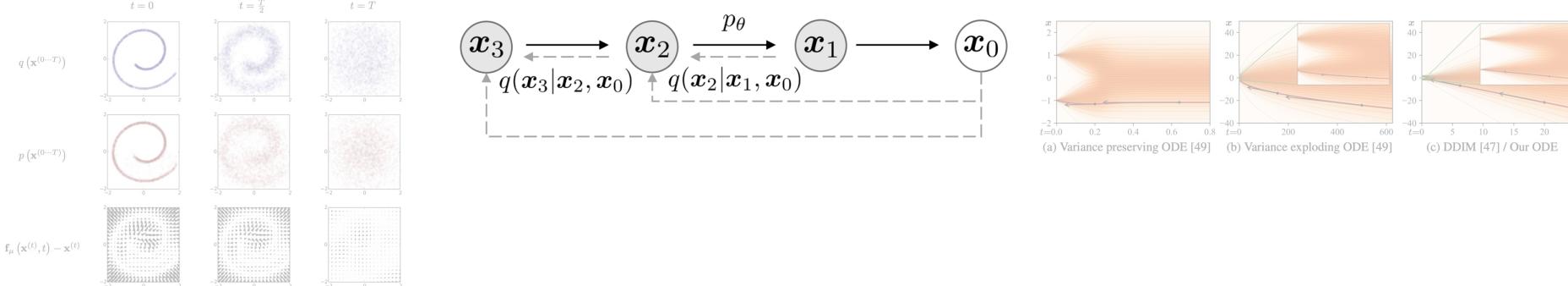
DPM [ICML'15]
2015 / 3 (Stanford)



DDIM [ICLR'21]
2020 / 10 (Ermon)

EDM [NeurIPS'22]
2022 / 6 (NVIDIA)

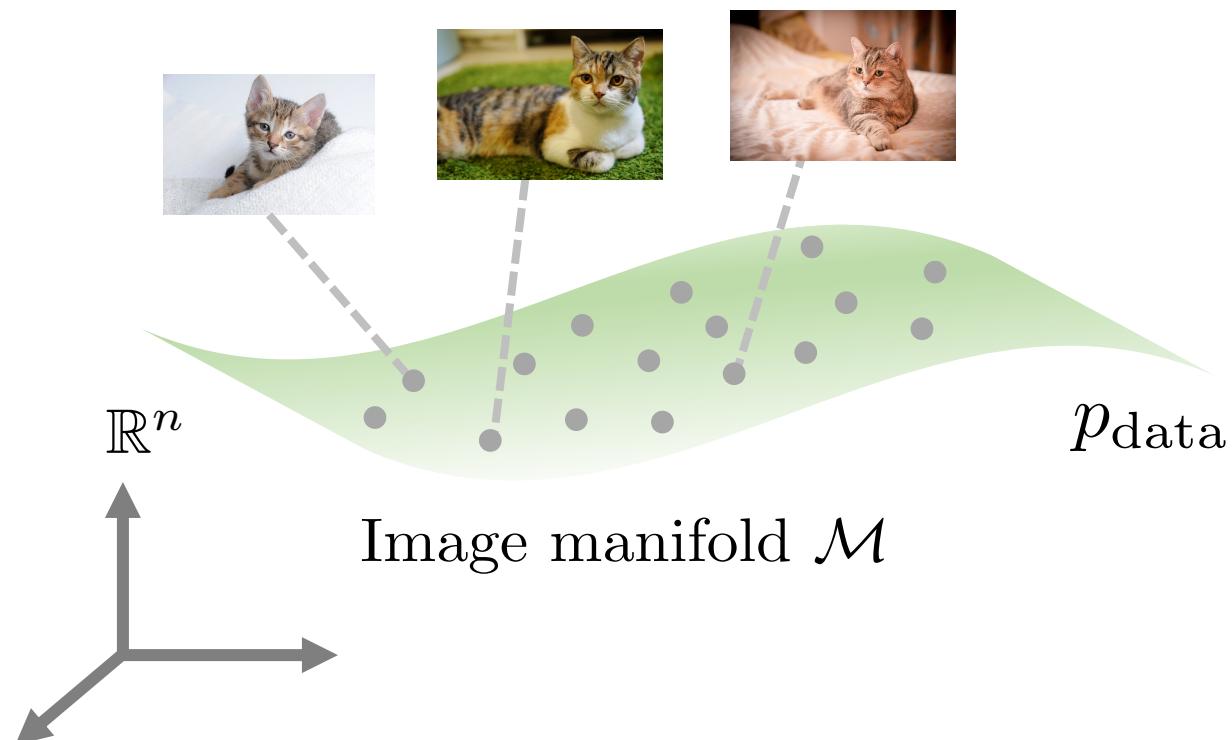
CTM [ICLR'24]
2023 / 10 (Sony AI)



What is Generative Model Learning?

Data Manifold Assumption

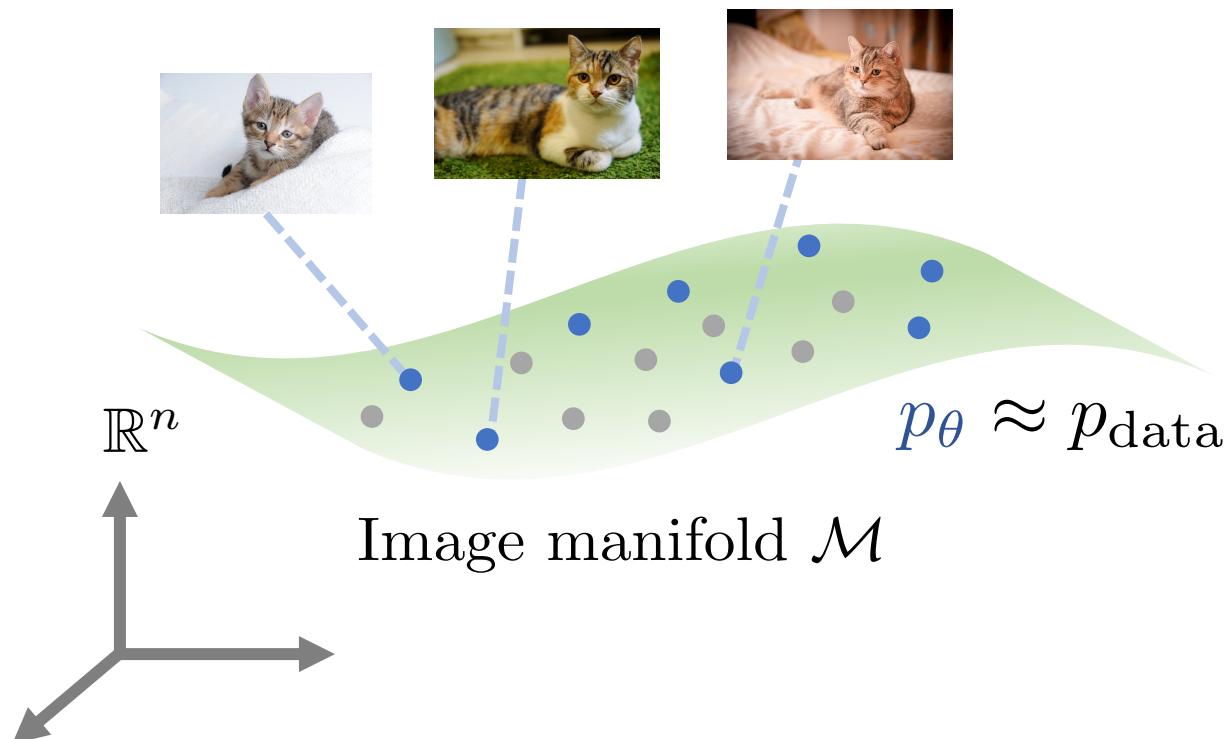
Natural high-dimensional data concentrate close to a non-linear low-dimensional manifold



What is Generative Model Learning?

Data Manifold Assumption

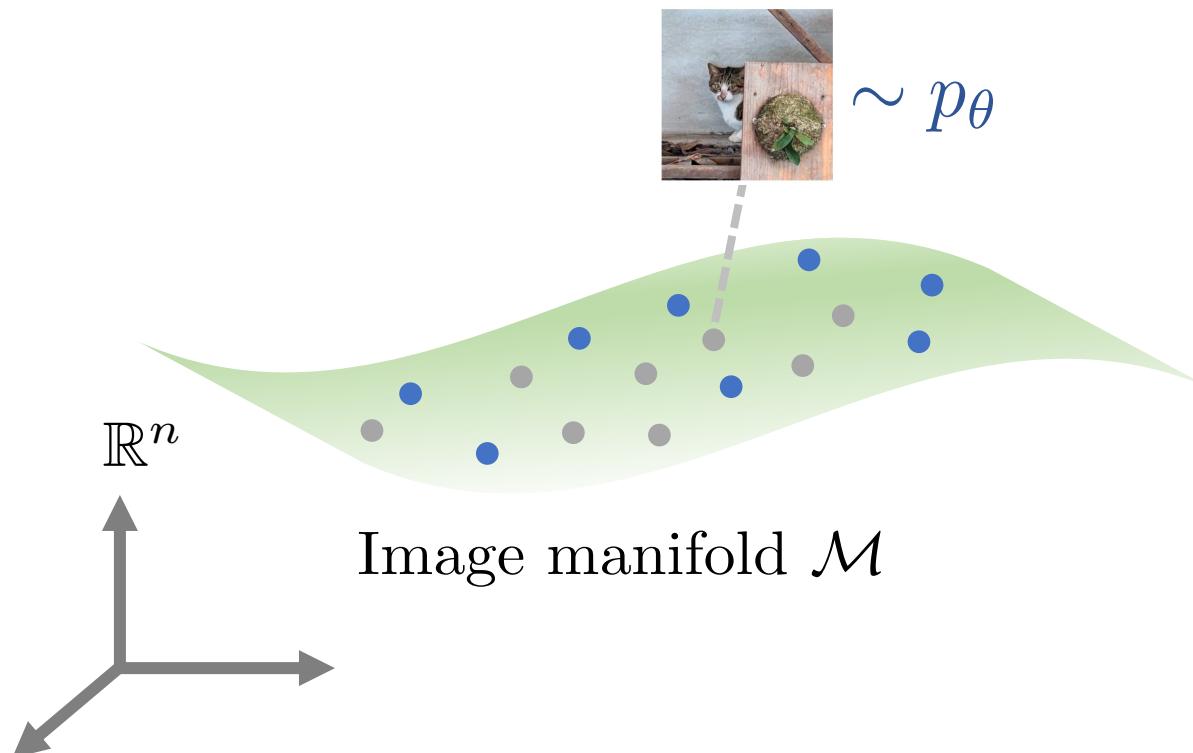
Natural high-dimensional data concentrate close to a non-linear low-dimensional manifold



What is Generative Model Learning?

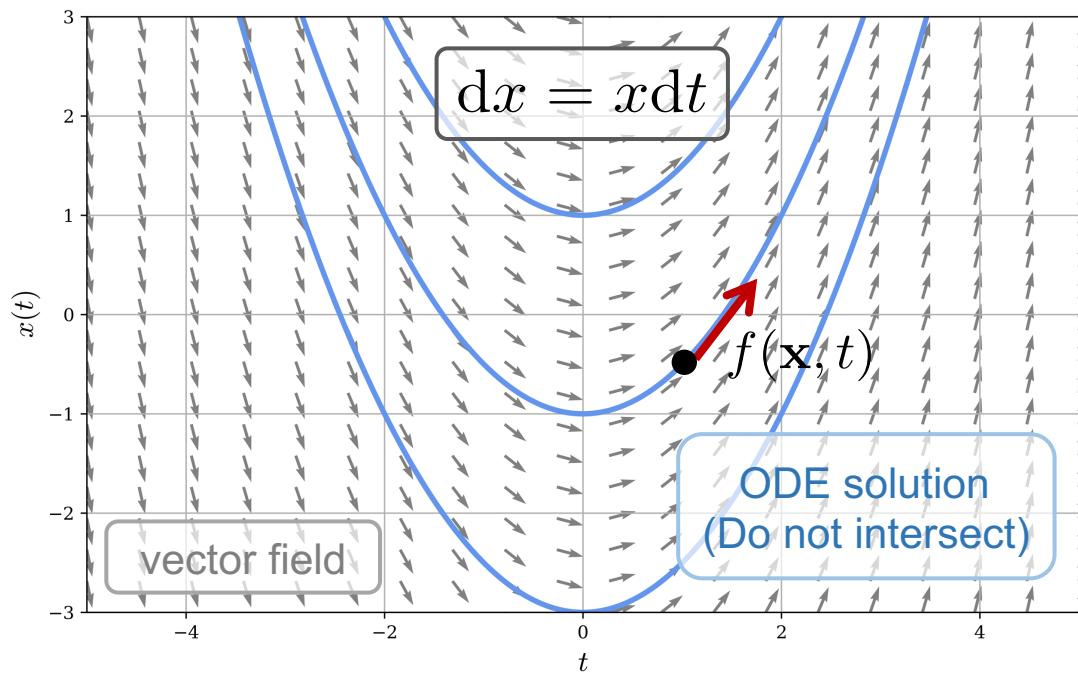
Data Manifold Assumption

Natural high-dimensional data concentrate close to a non-linear low-dimensional manifold

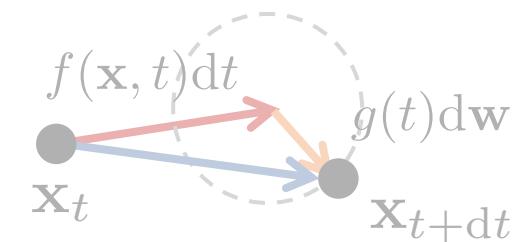


Recap ODE and SDE

$$d\mathbf{x} = f(\mathbf{x}, t)dt \quad \text{or} \quad \frac{d\mathbf{x}}{dt} = f(\mathbf{x}, t)$$

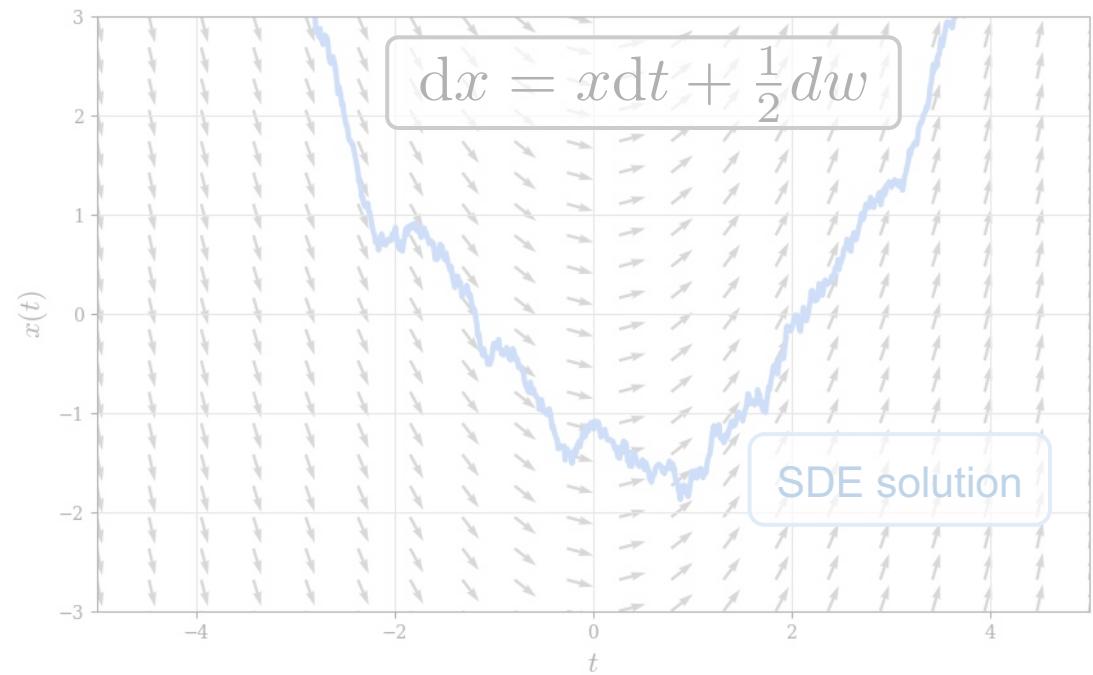


The arrow indicates the direction of movement at the moment of downward shift

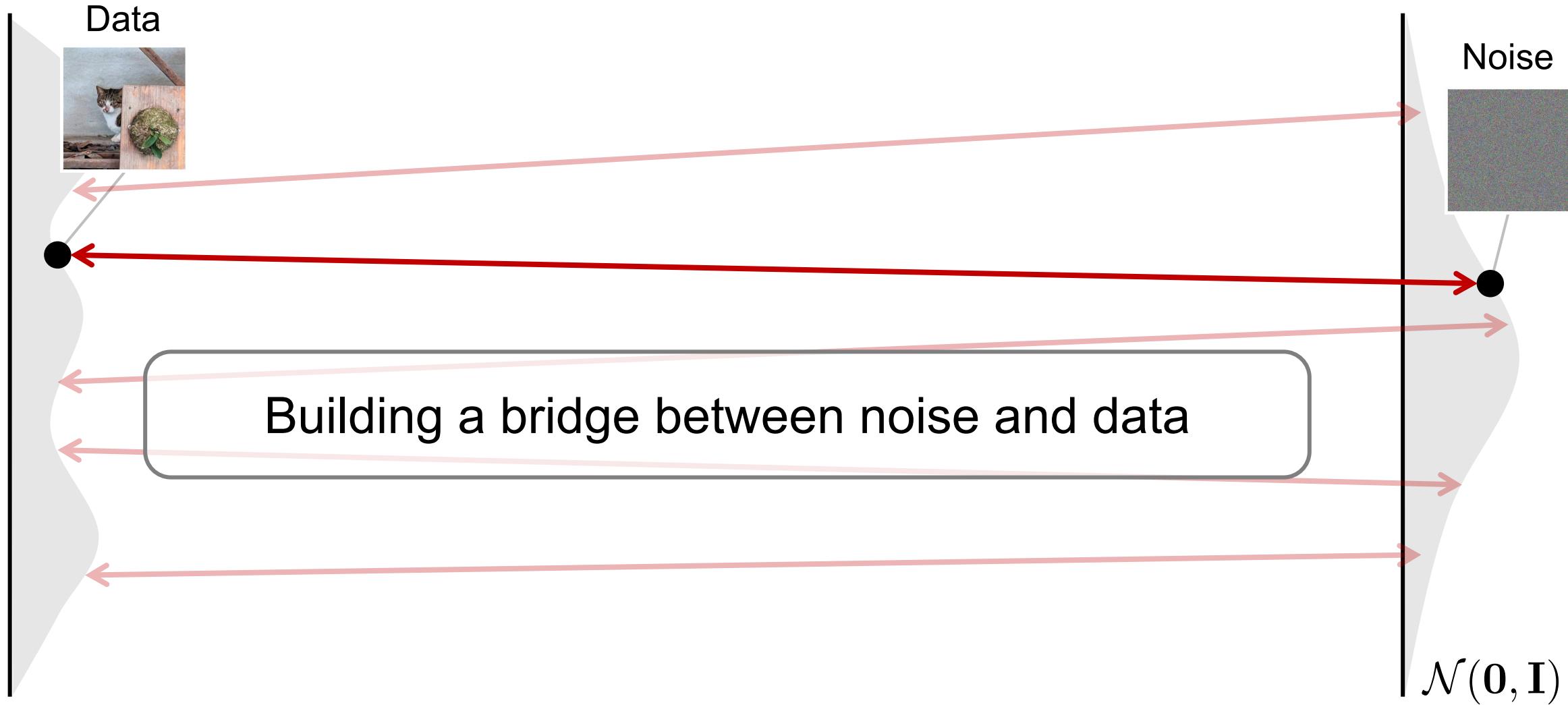


$$d\mathbf{x} = f(\mathbf{x}, t)dt + g(t)d\mathbf{w}$$

drift diffusion



The Goal of Diffusion Models



What is Diffusion Model?

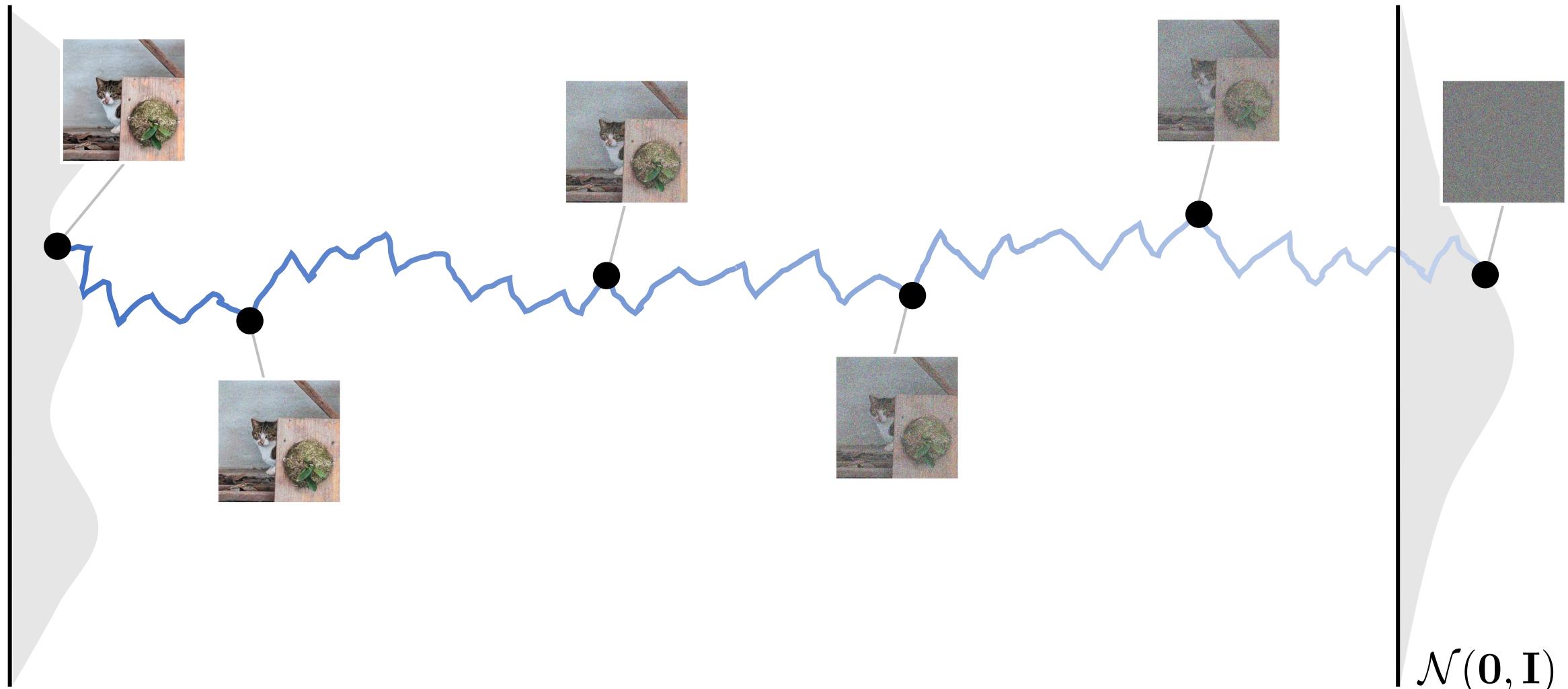
Forward Process: add noise step by step, from data to pure noise



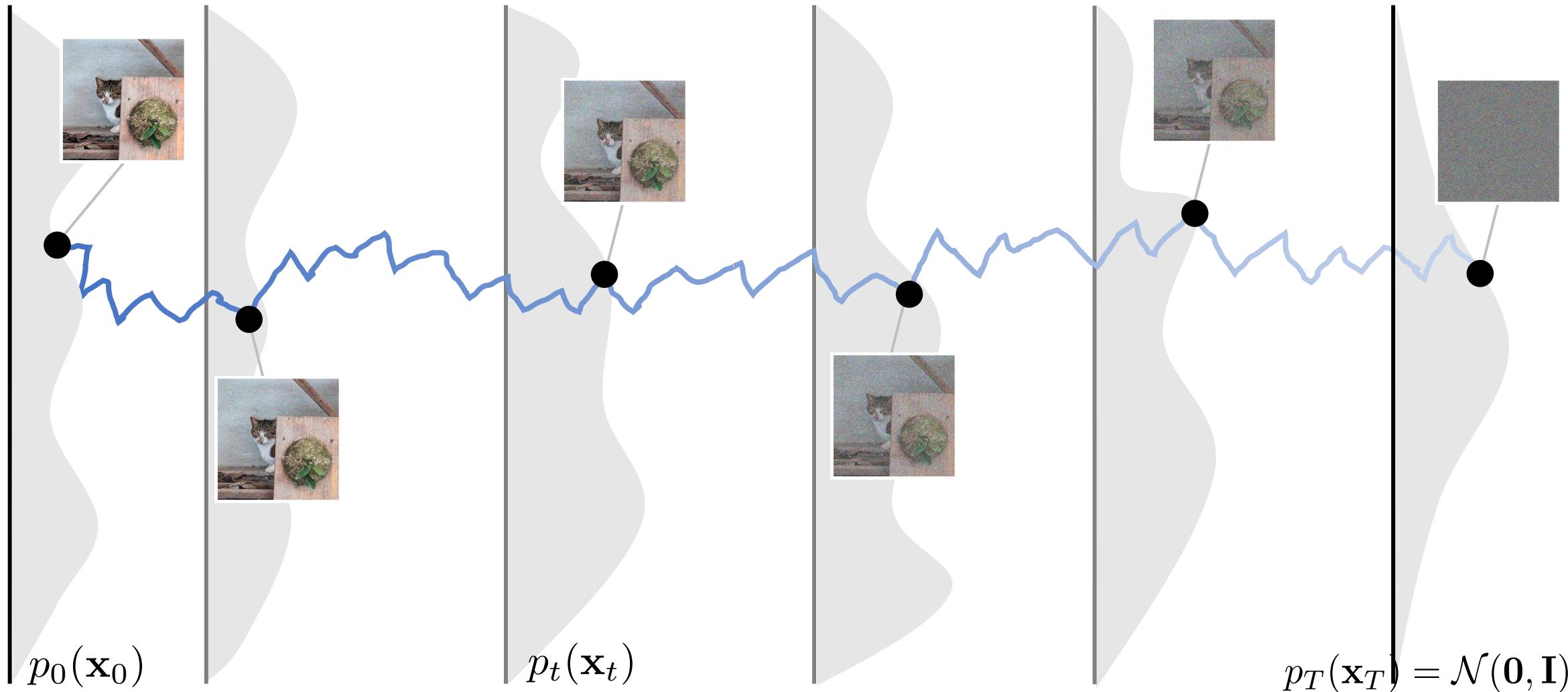
Reverse Process: generate data from pure noise by denoising

Creating noise from data is easy; creating data from noise is generative modeling – Yang Song

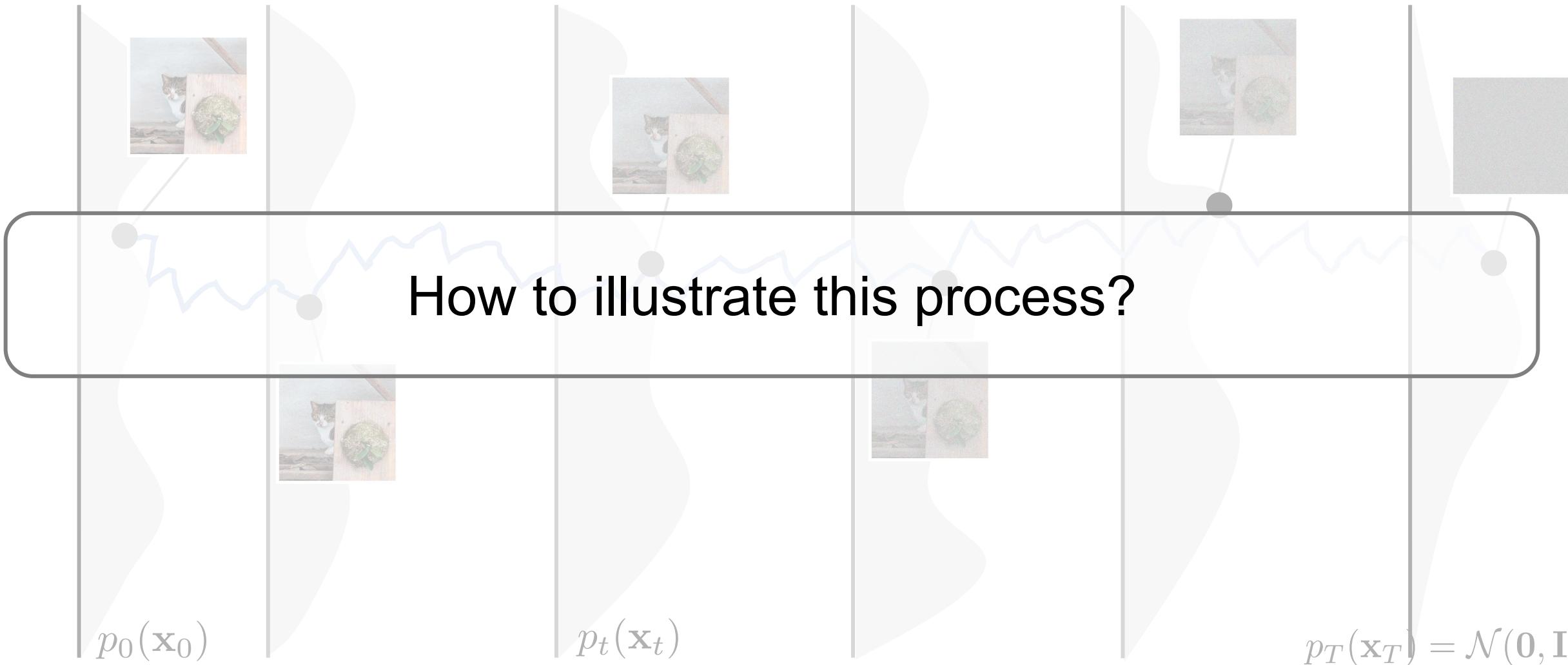
Diffusion Models



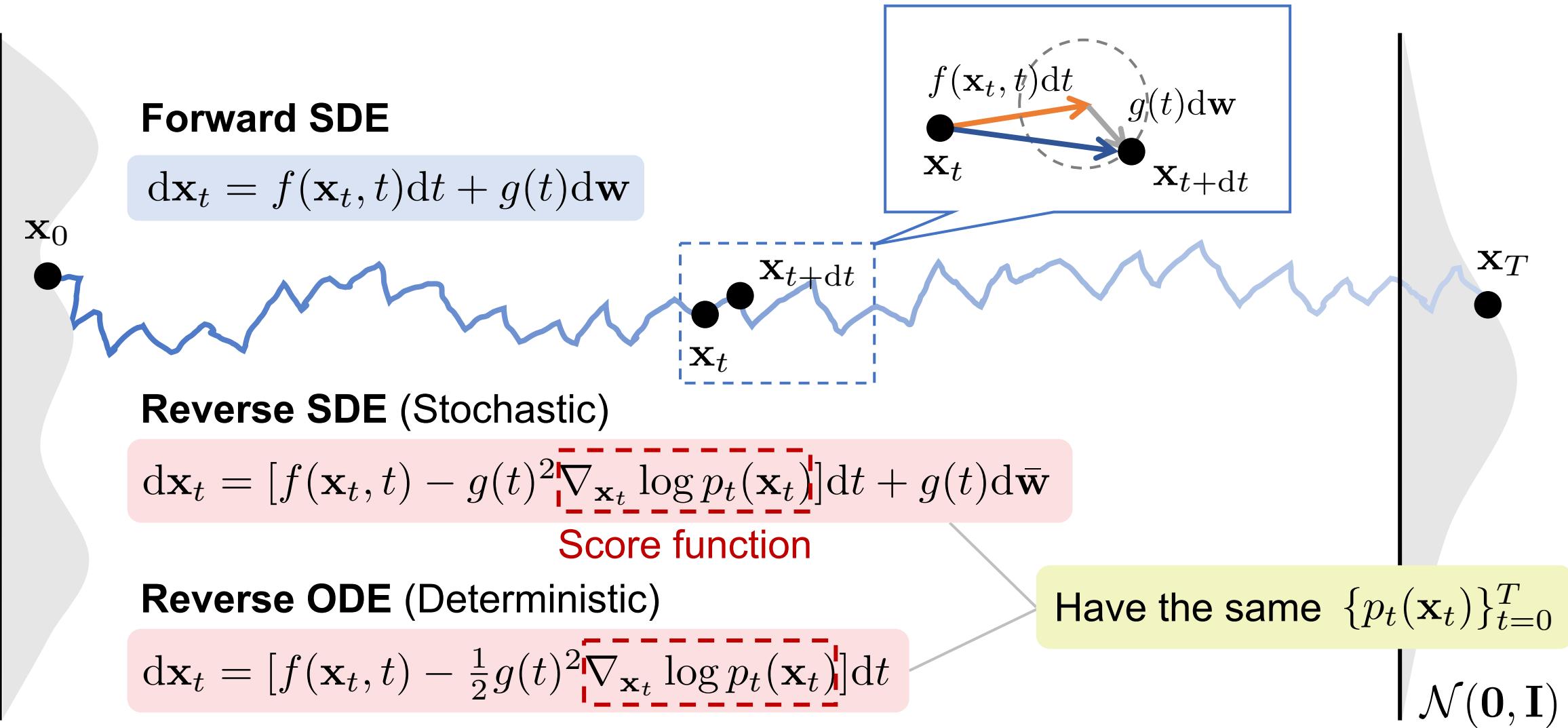
Diffusion Models



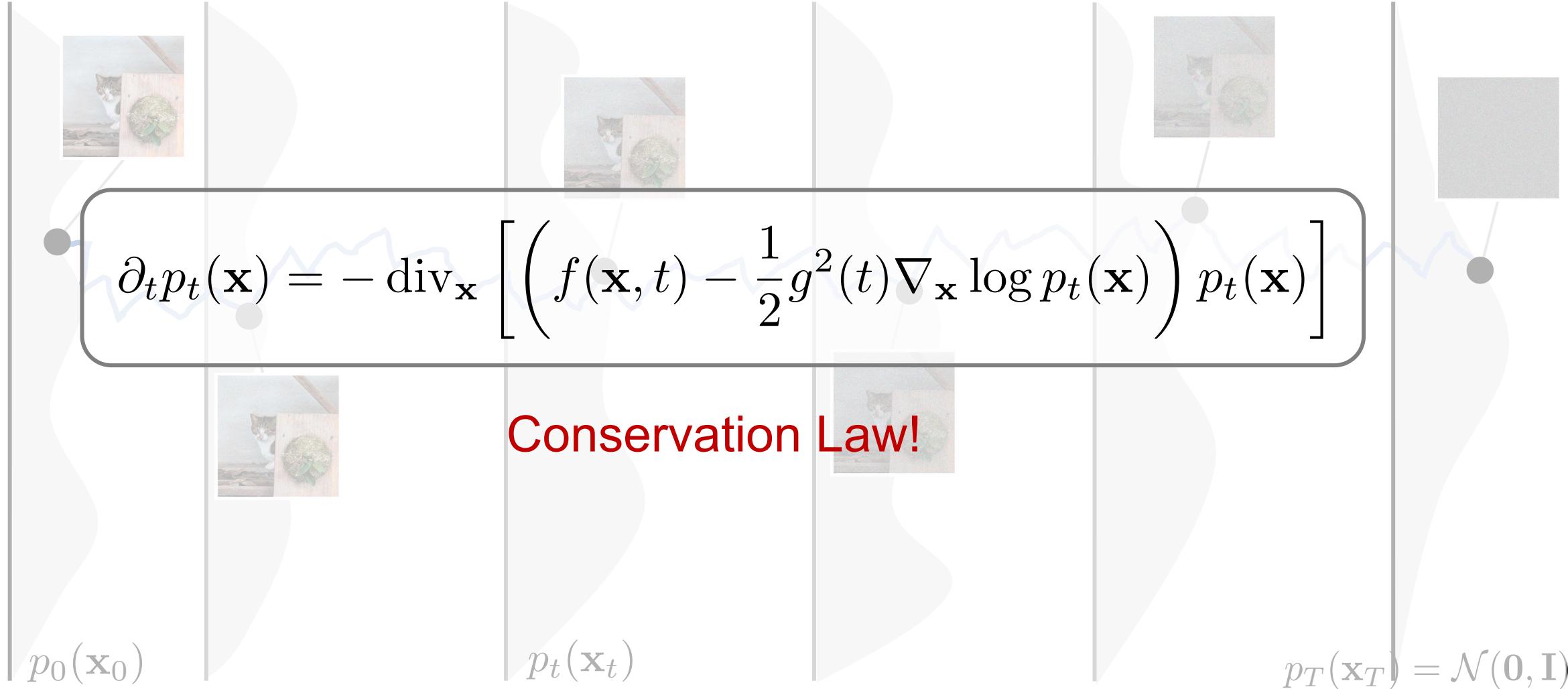
Diffusion Models



Score-based Diffusion Models [Song+ ICLR'21]



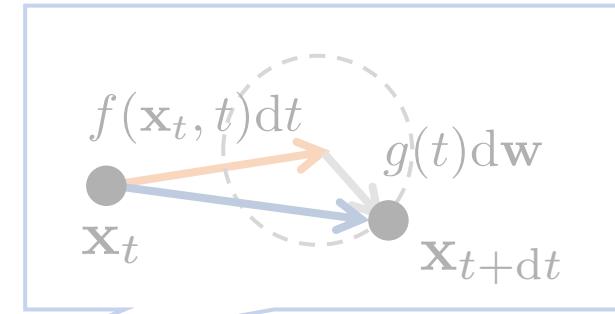
Score-based Diffusion Models [Song+ ICLR'21]



Score-based Diffusion Models [Song+ ICLR'21]

Forward SDE

$$d\mathbf{x}_t = f(\mathbf{x}_t, t)dt + g(t)d\mathbf{w}$$



\mathbf{x}_0

What is intuition of score function?

Reverse SDE (stochastic)

$$d\mathbf{x}_t = [f(\mathbf{x}_t, t) - g(t)^2 \nabla_{\mathbf{x}_t} \log p_t(\mathbf{x}_t)]dt + g(t)d\bar{\mathbf{w}}$$

Score function

Reverse ODE (deterministic)

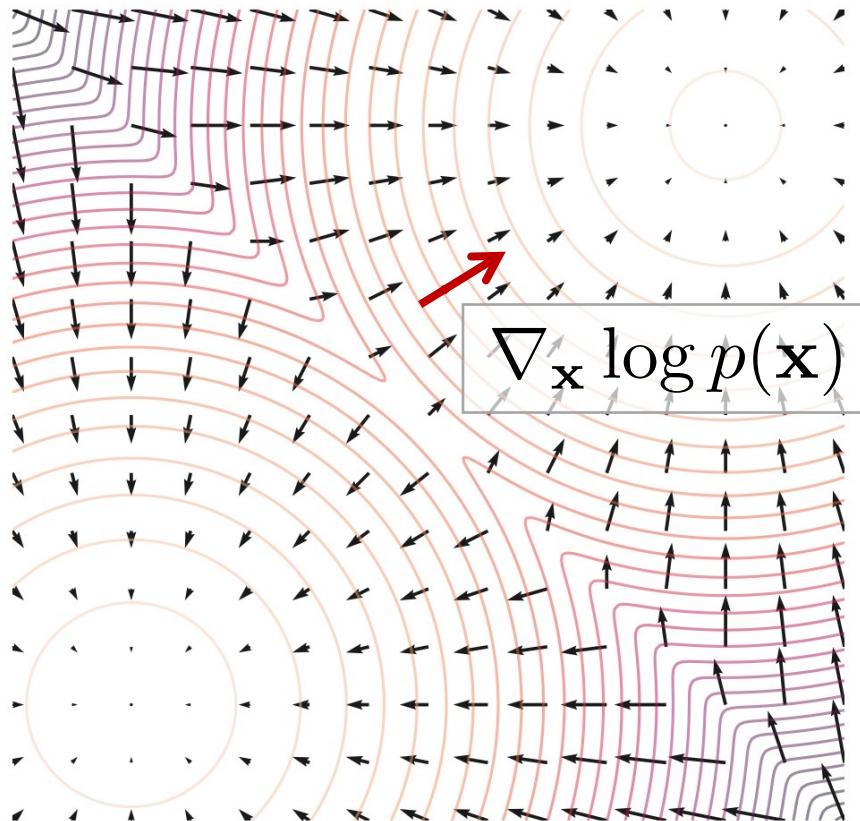
$$d\mathbf{x}_t = [f(\mathbf{x}_t, t) - \frac{1}{2}g(t)^2 \nabla_{\mathbf{x}_t} \log p_t(\mathbf{x}_t)]dt$$

Have the same $\{p_t(\mathbf{x}_t)\}_{t=0}^T$

$$\mathcal{N}(\mathbf{0}, \mathbf{I})$$

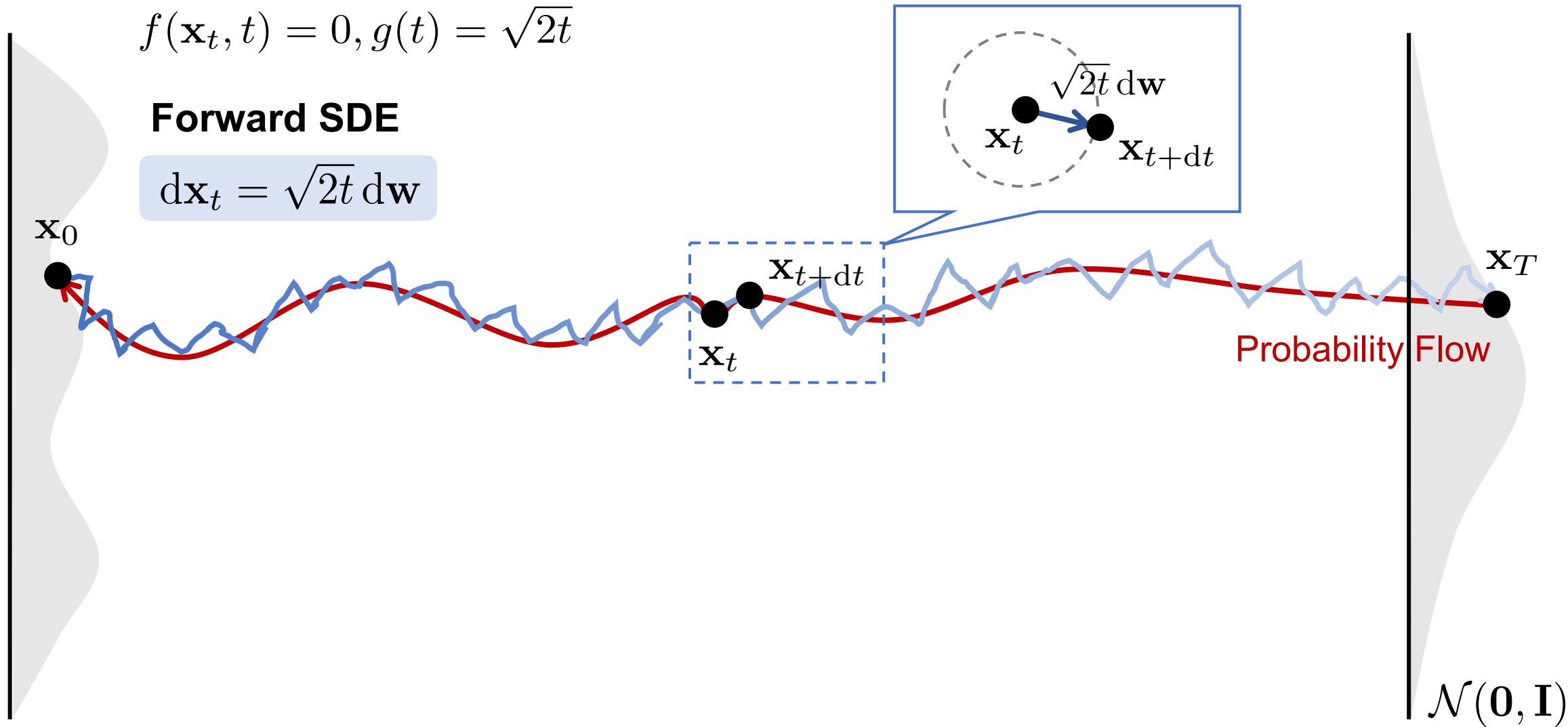
Score Function

Probability Density Function $p(\mathbf{x})$



Score Function: The direction in which the probability density increases most rapidly

Score-based Diffusion Models [Song+ ICLR'21]



Score-based Diffusion Models [Song+ ICLR'21]

$$f(\mathbf{x}_t, t) = 0, g(t) = \sqrt{2t}$$

Forward SDE

$$d\mathbf{x}_t = \sqrt{2t} dw$$

\mathbf{x}_0

\mathbf{x}_{t-dt}

\mathbf{x}_t

\mathbf{x}_T

Reverse ODE

$$d\mathbf{x}_t = -t \nabla_{\mathbf{x}_t} \log p_t(\mathbf{x}_t) dt$$

Probability Flow

\mathbf{x}_{t-dt}

$$-t \nabla_{\mathbf{x}_t} \log p_t(\mathbf{x}_t)$$

dt

\mathbf{x}_t

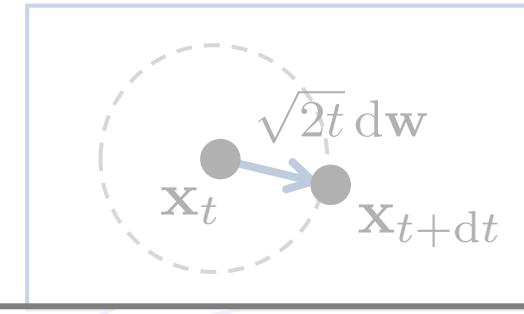
$\mathcal{N}(\mathbf{0}, \mathbf{I})$

Score-based Diffusion Models [Song+ ICLR'21]

$$f(\mathbf{x}_t, t) = 0, g(t) = \sqrt{2t}$$

Forward SDE

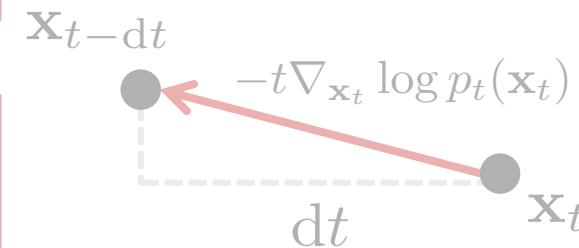
$$d\mathbf{x}_t = \sqrt{2t} dw$$



Can we compute $\mathbf{x}_0 = \mathbf{x}_T + \int_0^T -t \nabla_{\mathbf{x}_t} \log p_t(\mathbf{x}_t) dt$?

Very difficulty!

$$d\mathbf{x}_t = -t \nabla_{\mathbf{x}_t} \log p_t(\mathbf{x}_t) dt$$



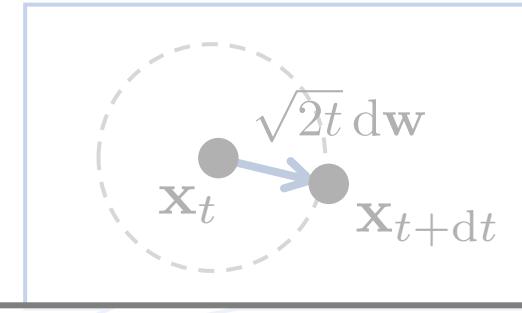
$$\mathcal{N}(\mathbf{0}, \mathbf{I})$$

Score-based Diffusion Models [Song+ ICLR'21]

$$f(\mathbf{x}_t, t) = 0, g(t) = \sqrt{2t}$$

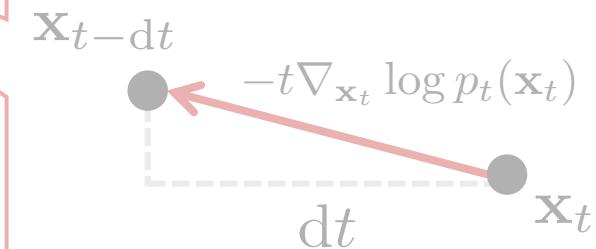
Forward SDE

$$d\mathbf{x}_t = \sqrt{2t} dw$$



1. How do we obtain the score function during sampling?
2. How to solve the reverse ODE?

$$d\mathbf{x}_t = -t \nabla_{\mathbf{x}_t} \log p_t(\mathbf{x}_t) dt$$



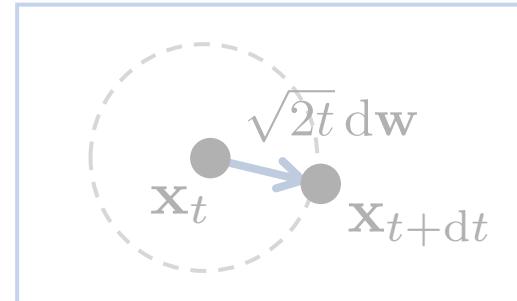
$$\mathcal{N}(\mathbf{0}, \mathbf{I})$$

Score-based Diffusion Models [Song+ ICLR'21]

$$f(\mathbf{x}_t, t) = 0, g(t) = \sqrt{2t}$$

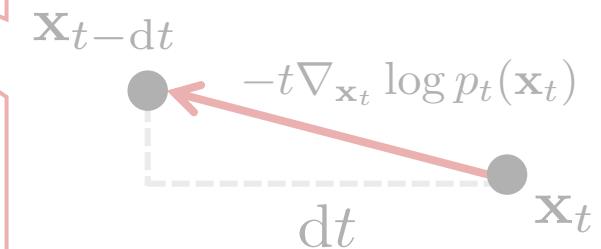
Forward SDE

$$d\mathbf{x}_t = \sqrt{2t} dw$$



1. How do we obtain the score function during sampling?
2. How to solve the reverse ODE?

$$d\mathbf{x}_t = -t \nabla_{\mathbf{x}_t} \log p_t(\mathbf{x}_t) dt$$



$$\mathcal{N}(\mathbf{0}, \mathbf{I})$$

Training Score-based Diffusion Models

We train the model to approximate the score function

$$\mathbf{s}_\theta(\mathbf{x}_t, t) \approx \nabla_{\mathbf{x}_t} \log p_t(\mathbf{x}_t)$$

During sampling, we use the model to predict the score and plug it into SDE/ODE

$$d\mathbf{x}_t = [f(\mathbf{x}_t, t) - g(t)^2 \mathbf{s}_\theta(\mathbf{x}_t, t)] dt + g(t) d\bar{\mathbf{w}}$$

Score Matching (SM) [\[Hyvarinen JMLR'05\]](#):

$$\mathcal{L}_{\text{SM}}(\mathbf{x}_0; \theta) = \mathbb{E}_{\mathbf{x}_t | \mathbf{x}_0} \|\mathbf{s}_\theta(\mathbf{x}_t, t) - \nabla_{\mathbf{x}_t} \log p_t(\mathbf{x}_t)\|_2^2$$

Training Score-based Diffusion Models

We train the model to approximate the score function

$$\mathbf{s}_\theta(\mathbf{x}_t, t) \approx \nabla_{\mathbf{x}_t} \log p_t(\mathbf{x}_t)$$

During sampling, we use the model to predict the score and plug it into SDE (ODE)

Can we easily compute the score function during training?

$$d\mathbf{x}_t = [f(\mathbf{x}_t, t) - g(t)^2 \mathbf{s}_\theta(\mathbf{x}_t, t)] dt + g(t) d\bar{w}$$

The training objective can be expressed as

$$\mathcal{L}_{SM}(\mathbf{x}_0; \theta) = \mathbb{E}_{\mathbf{x}_t | \mathbf{x}_0} \|\mathbf{s}_\theta(\mathbf{x}_t, t) - \nabla_{\mathbf{x}_t} \log p_t(\mathbf{x}_t)\|_2^2 \text{ (Score Matching)}$$

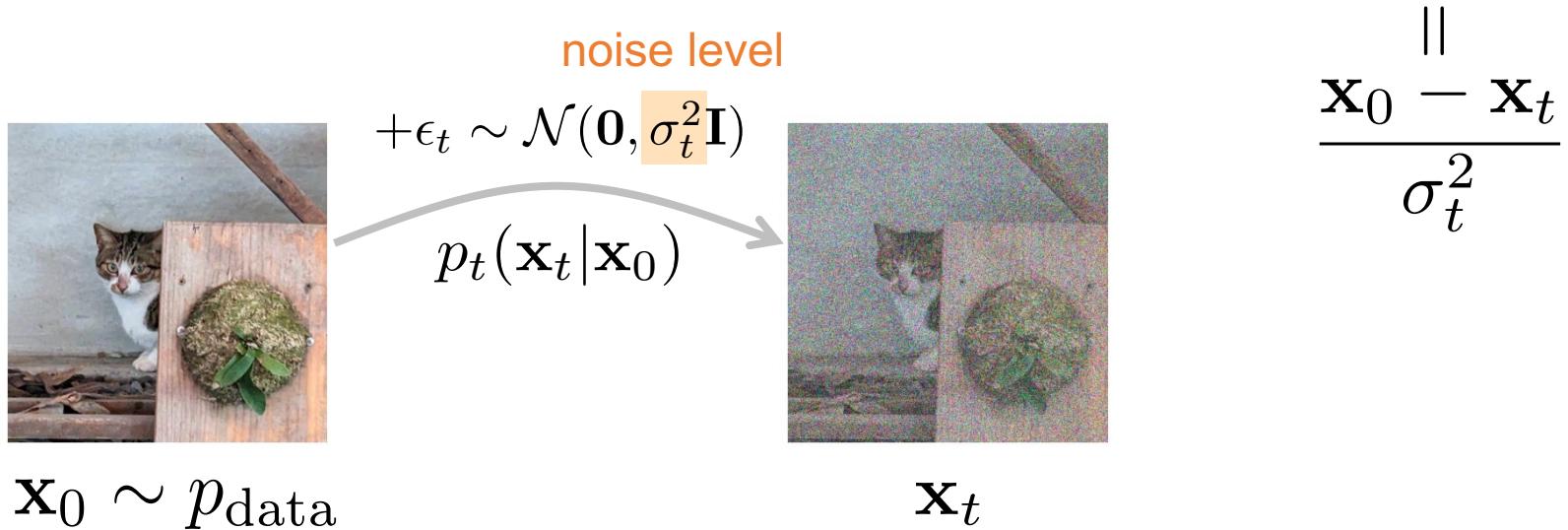
Training Score-based Diffusion Models

Score Matching (SM) [Hyvarinen JMLR'05]:

$$\mathcal{L}_{\text{SM}}(\mathbf{x}_0; \theta) = \mathbb{E}_{\mathbf{x}_t | \mathbf{x}_0} \|\mathbf{s}_\theta(\mathbf{x}_t, t) - \nabla_{\mathbf{x}_t} \log p_t(\mathbf{x}_t)\|_2^2$$

Denoising Score Matching (DSM) [Vincent Neural Comput.'11]:

$$\mathcal{L}_{\text{DSM}}(\mathbf{x}_0; \theta) = \mathbb{E}_{\mathbf{x}_t | \mathbf{x}_0} \|\mathbf{s}_\theta(\mathbf{x}_t, t) - \boxed{\nabla_{\mathbf{x}_t} \log p_t(\mathbf{x}_t | \mathbf{x}_0)}\|_2^2$$

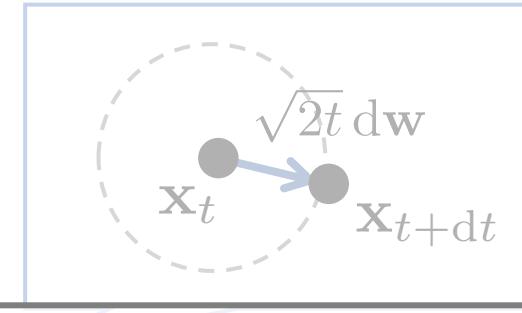


Score-based Diffusion Models [Song+ ICLR'21]

$$f(\mathbf{x}_t, t) = 0, g(t) = \sqrt{2t}$$

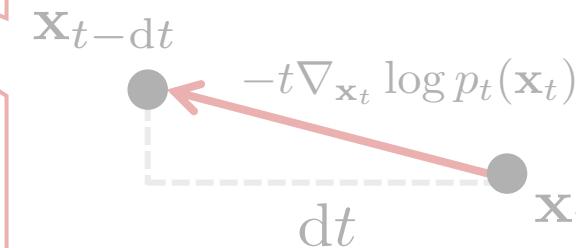
Forward SDE

$$d\mathbf{x}_t = \sqrt{2t} dw$$



1. How do we obtain the score function during sampling?
2. How to solve the reverse ODE?

$$d\mathbf{x}_t = -t \nabla_{\mathbf{x}_t} \log p_t(\mathbf{x}_t) dt$$



$$\mathcal{N}(\mathbf{0}, \mathbf{I})$$

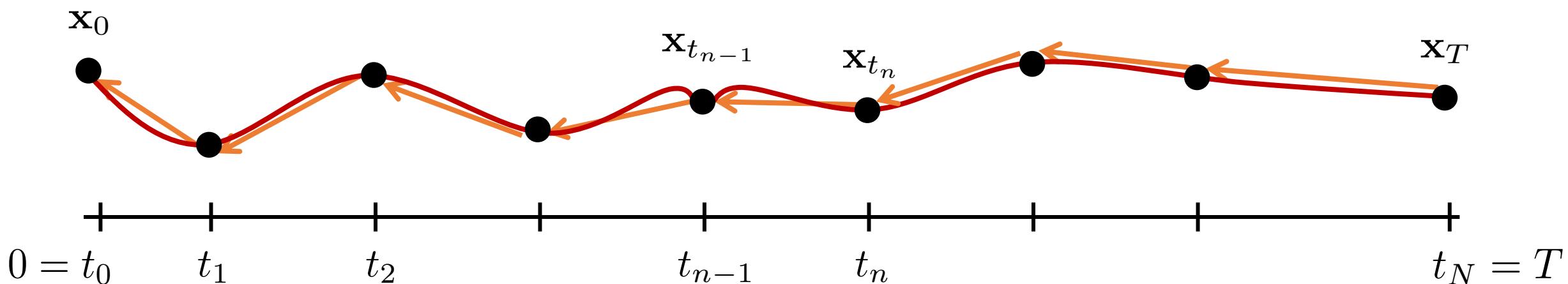
How to Solve the Reverse ODE?

Euler's Method (1st order):

$$\frac{d\mathbf{x}_t}{dt} = -ts\theta(\mathbf{x}_t, t)$$

or

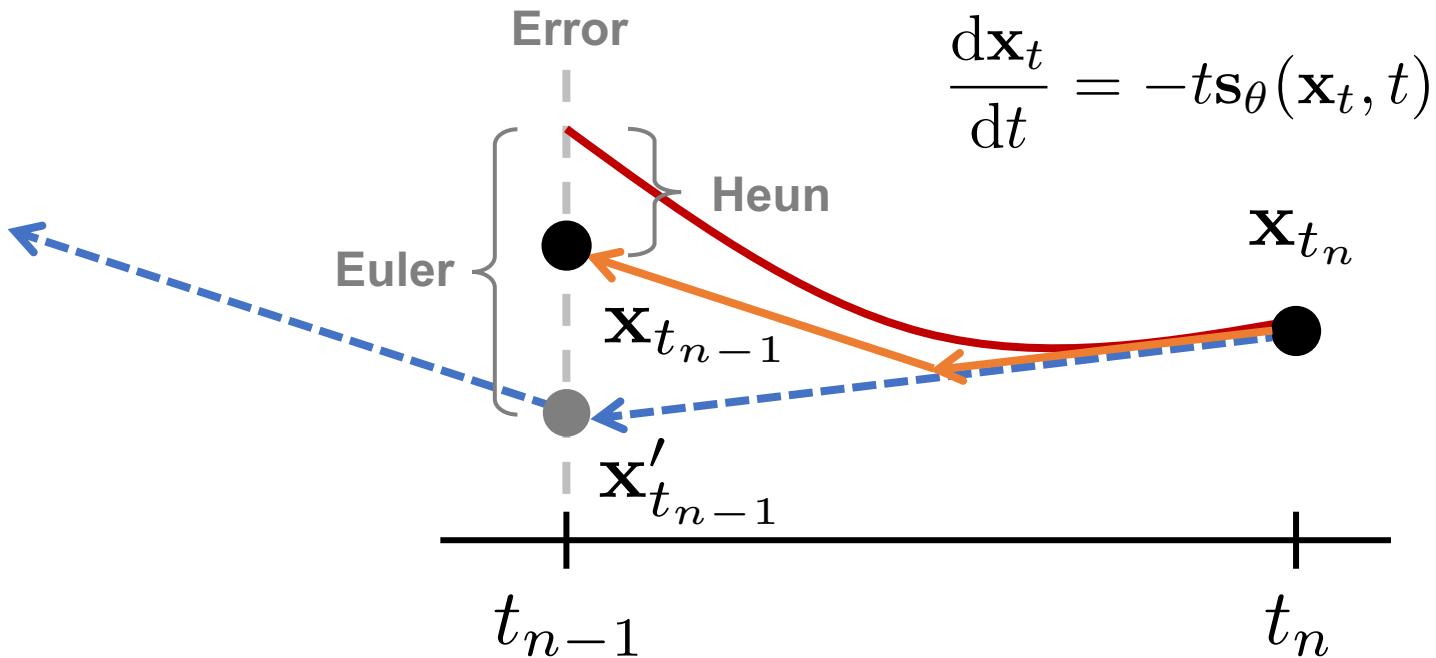
$$\frac{\mathbf{x}_{t_{n-1}} - \mathbf{x}_{t_n}}{t_{n-1} - t_n} + O(n)$$



$$\mathbf{x}_{t_{n-1}} = \mathbf{x}_{t_n} - (t_{n-1} - t_n)t_n \mathbf{s}_\theta(\mathbf{x}_{t_n}, t_n)$$

How to Solve the Reverse ODE?

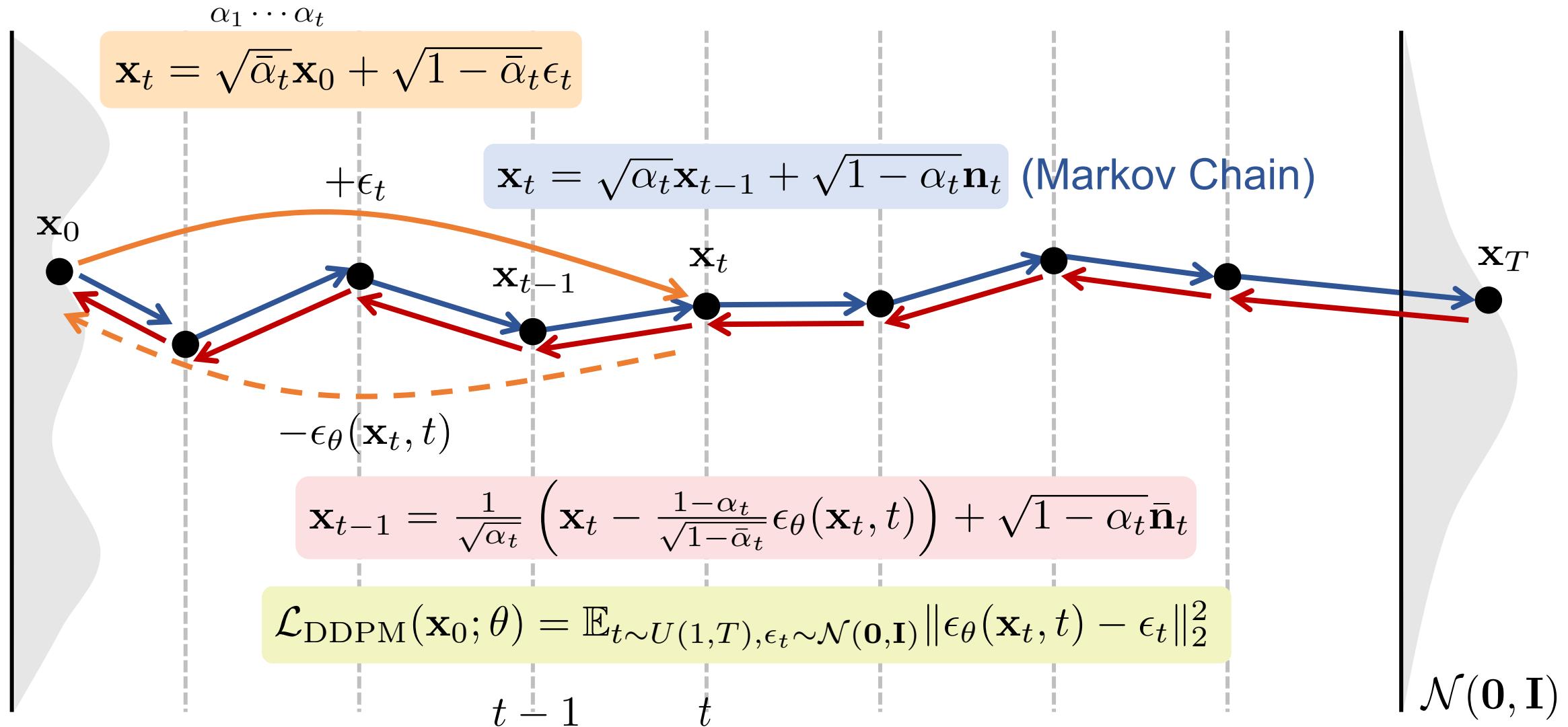
Heun's Method (2nd order):



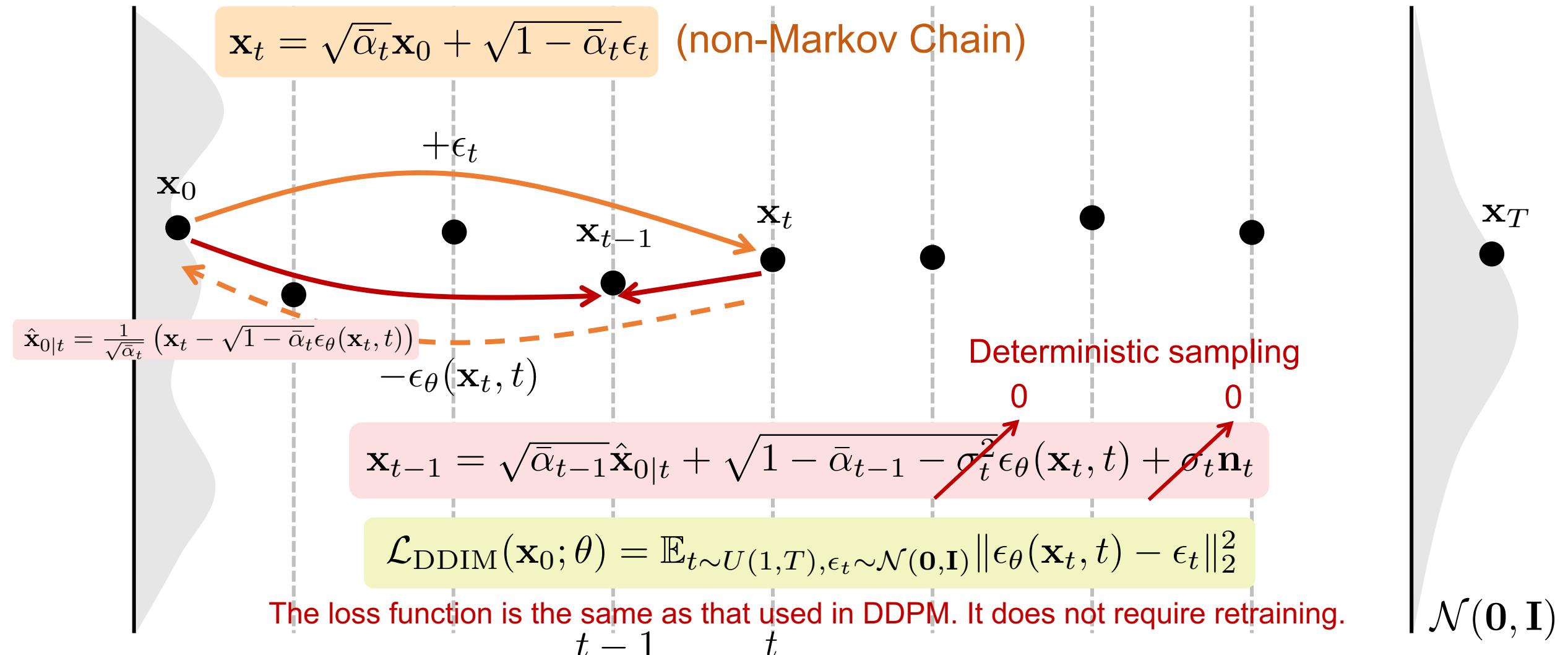
$$\mathbf{x}'_{t_{n-1}} = \mathbf{x}_{t_n} - (t_{n-1} - t_n) t_n \mathbf{s}_\theta(\mathbf{x}_{t_n}, t_n)$$

$$\mathbf{x}_{t_{n-1}} = \mathbf{x}_{t_n} - \frac{1}{2}(t_{n-1} - t_n)[t_n \mathbf{s}_\theta(\mathbf{x}_{t_n}, t_n) + t_{n-1} \mathbf{s}_\theta(\mathbf{x}'_{t_{n-1}}, t_{n-1})]$$

Denoising Diffusion Probabilistic Models (DDPM) [Ho+ NeurIPS'20]

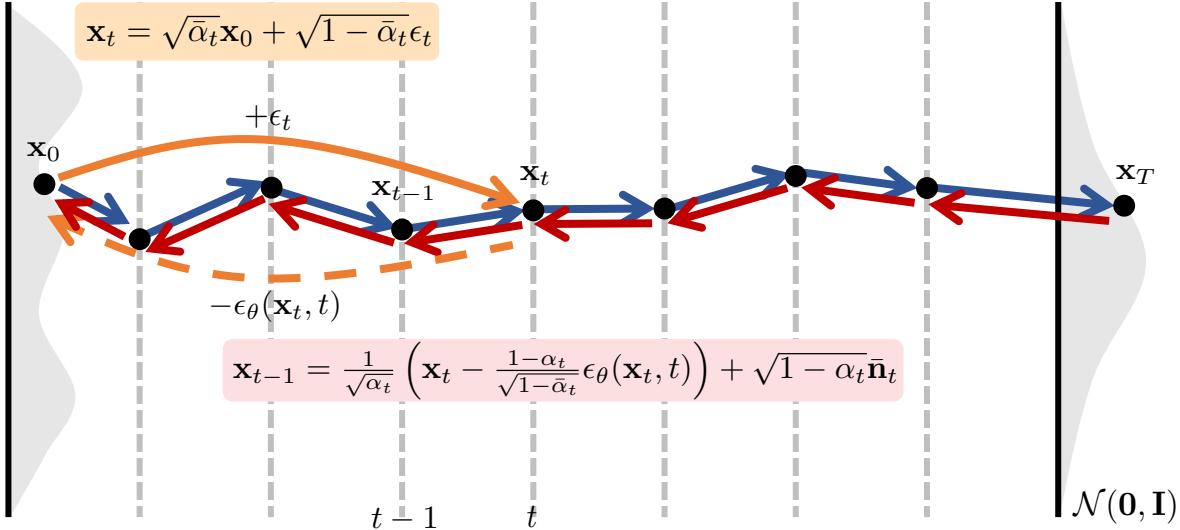


Denoising Diffusion Implicit Models (DDIM) [Song+ ICLR'21]



Summary: Discrete vs Continuous

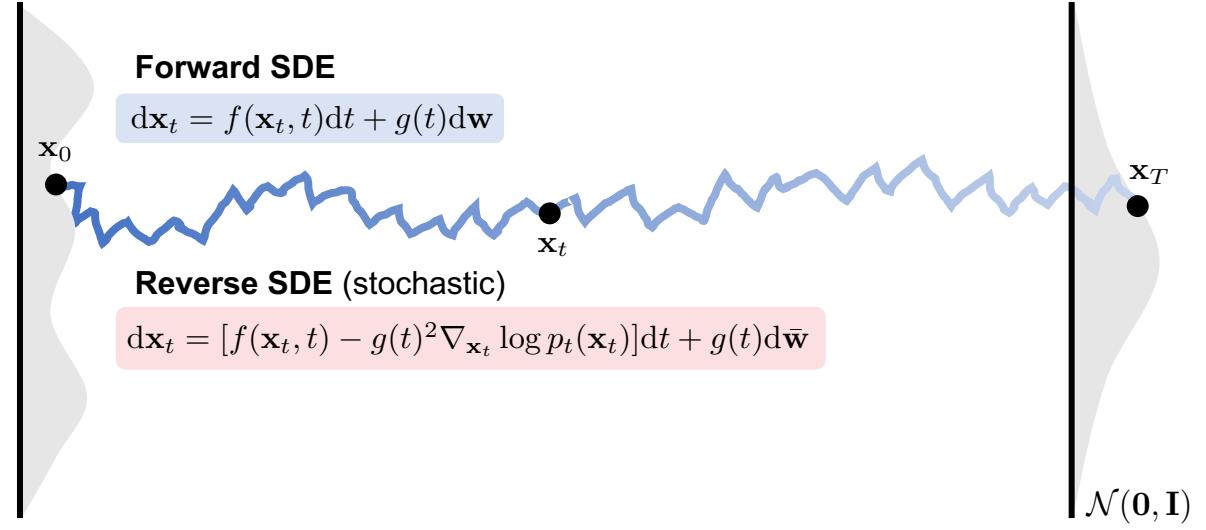
DDPM



$$\mathcal{L}_{\text{DDPM}}(\mathbf{x}_0; \theta) = \mathbb{E}_{t \sim U(1, T), \epsilon_t \sim \mathcal{N}(\mathbf{0}, \mathbf{I})} \|\epsilon_\theta(\mathbf{x}_t, t) - \epsilon_t\|_2^2$$

Discretized in the training phase

Score-based SDE



$$\mathcal{L}_{\text{DSM}}(\mathbf{x}_0; \theta) = \mathbb{E}_{\mathbf{x}_t | \mathbf{x}_0} \|\mathbf{s}_\theta(\mathbf{x}_t, t) - \nabla_{\mathbf{x}_t} \log p_t(\mathbf{x}_t | \mathbf{x}_0)\|_2^2$$

Discretized during sampling
The error is only affected by the order of the solver

Experiment Results

Table 2: NLLs and FIDs (ODE) on CIFAR-10.

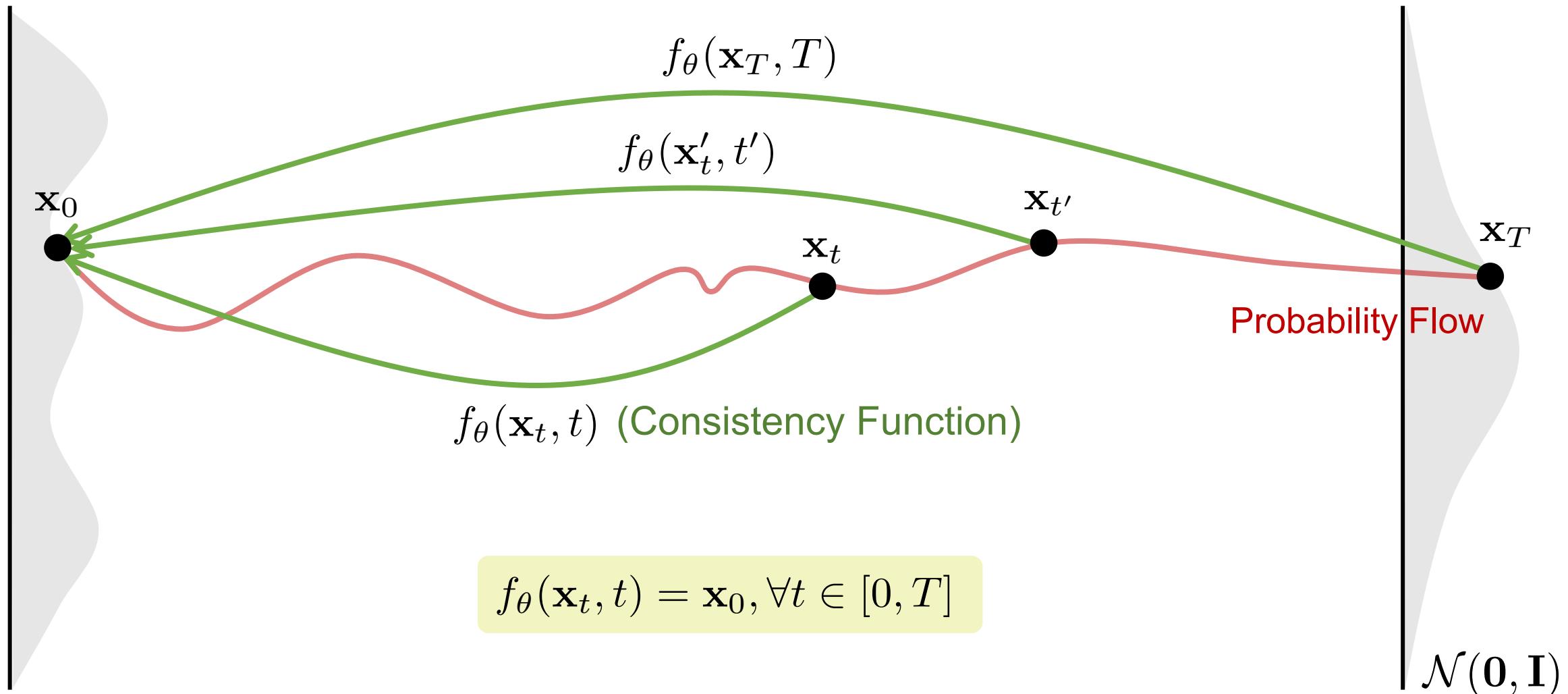
Model	NLL Test ↓	FID ↓
RealNVP (Dinh et al., 2016)	3.49	-
iResNet (Behrmann et al., 2019)	3.45	-
Glow (Kingma & Dhariwal, 2018)	3.35	-
MintNet (Song et al., 2019b)	3.32	-
Residual Flow (Chen et al., 2019)	3.28	46.37
FFJORD (Grathwohl et al., 2018)	3.40	-
Flow++ (Ho et al., 2019)	3.29	-
DDPM (L) (Ho et al., 2020)	$\leq 3.70^*$	13.51
DDPM (L_{simple}) (Ho et al., 2020)	$\leq 3.75^*$	3.17
DDPM	3.28	3.37
DDPM cont. (VP)	3.21	3.69
DDPM cont. (sub-VP)	3.05	3.56
DDPM++ cont. (VP)	3.16	3.93
DDPM++ cont. (sub-VP)	3.02	3.16
DDPM++ cont. (deep, VP)	3.13	3.08
DDPM++ cont. (deep, sub-VP)	2.99	2.92

Table 3: CIFAR-10 sample quality.

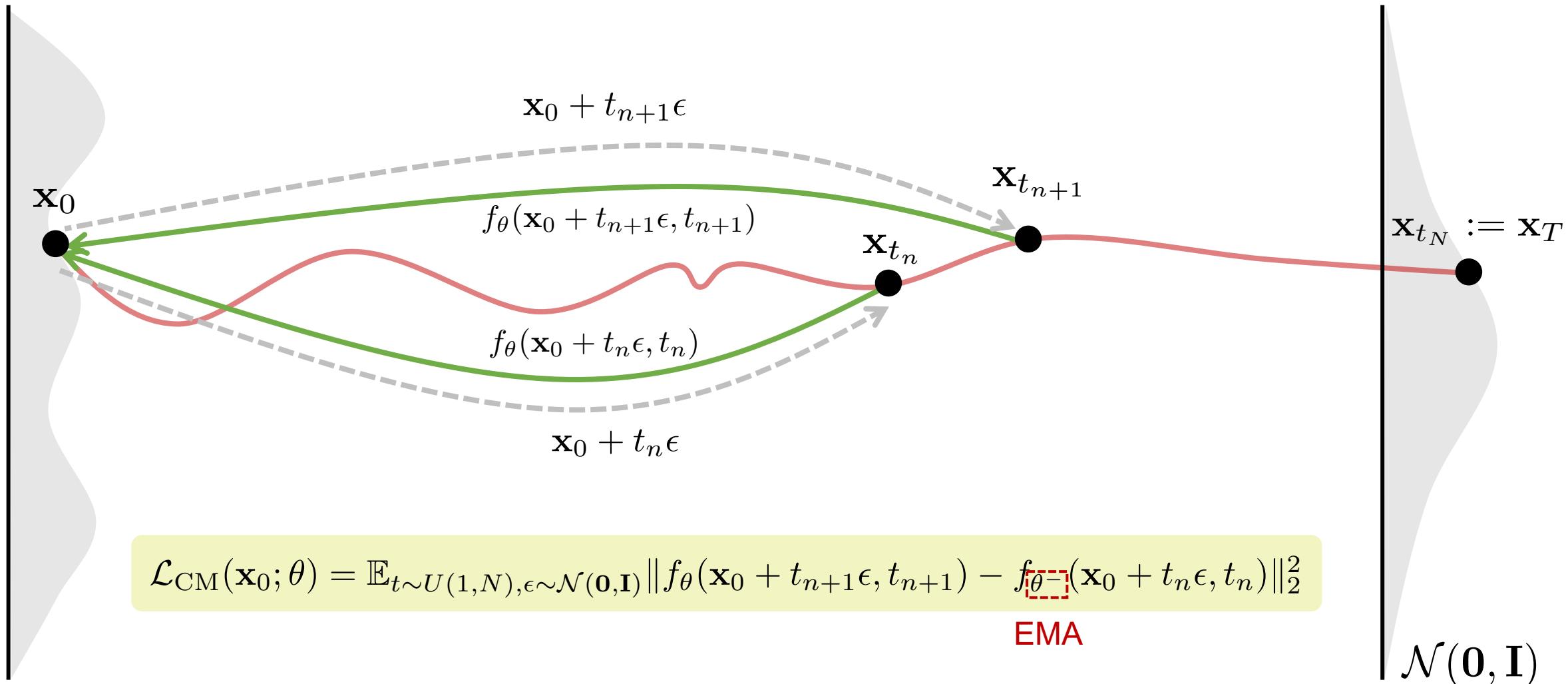
Model	FID↓	IS↑
Conditional		
BigGAN (Brock et al., 2018)	14.73	9.22
StyleGAN2-ADA (Karras et al., 2020a)	2.42	10.14
Unconditional		
StyleGAN2-ADA (Karras et al., 2020a)	2.92	9.83
NCSN (Song & Ermon, 2019)	25.32	$8.87 \pm .12$
NCSNv2 (Song & Ermon, 2020)	10.87	$8.40 \pm .07$
DDPM (Ho et al., 2020)	3.17	$9.46 \pm .11$
DDPM++	2.78	9.64
DDPM++ cont. (VP)	2.55	9.58
DDPM++ cont. (sub-VP)	2.61	9.56
DDPM++ cont. (deep, VP)	2.41	9.68
DDPM++ cont. (deep, sub-VP)	2.41	9.57
NCSN++	2.45	9.73
NCSN++ cont. (VE)	2.38	9.83
NCSN++ cont. (deep, VE)	2.20	9.89

Consistency Models (CM) [Song+ ICML'23]

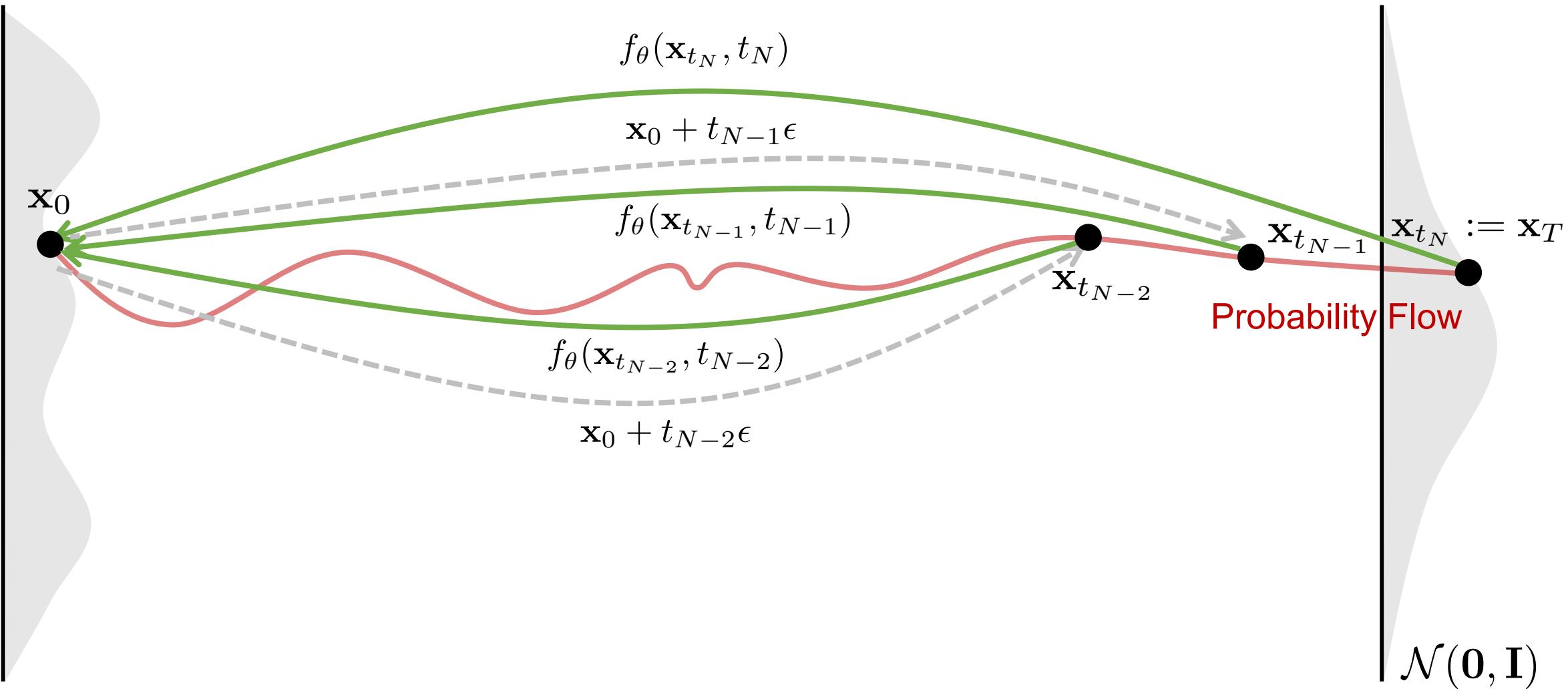
$$d\mathbf{x}_t = -t \nabla_{\mathbf{x}_t} \log p_t(\mathbf{x}_t) dt$$



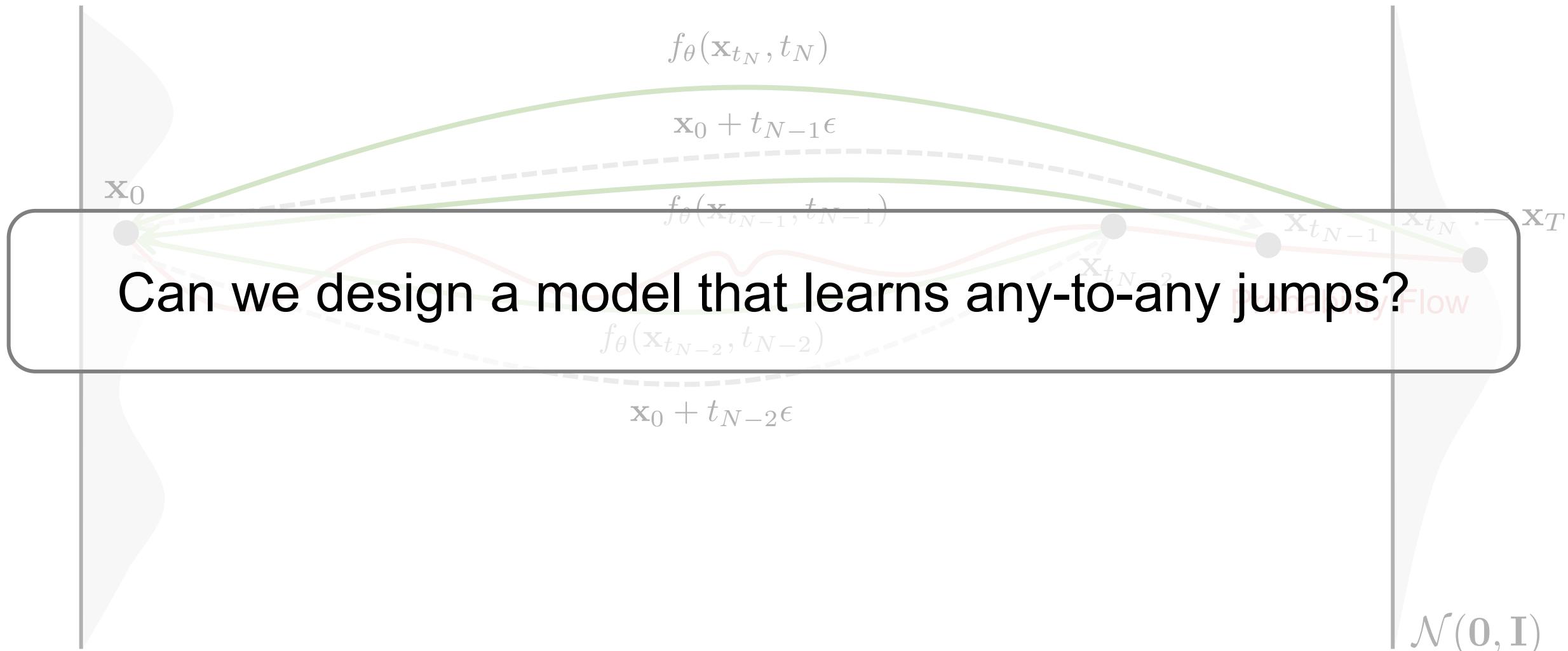
Training CM



Sampling with CM

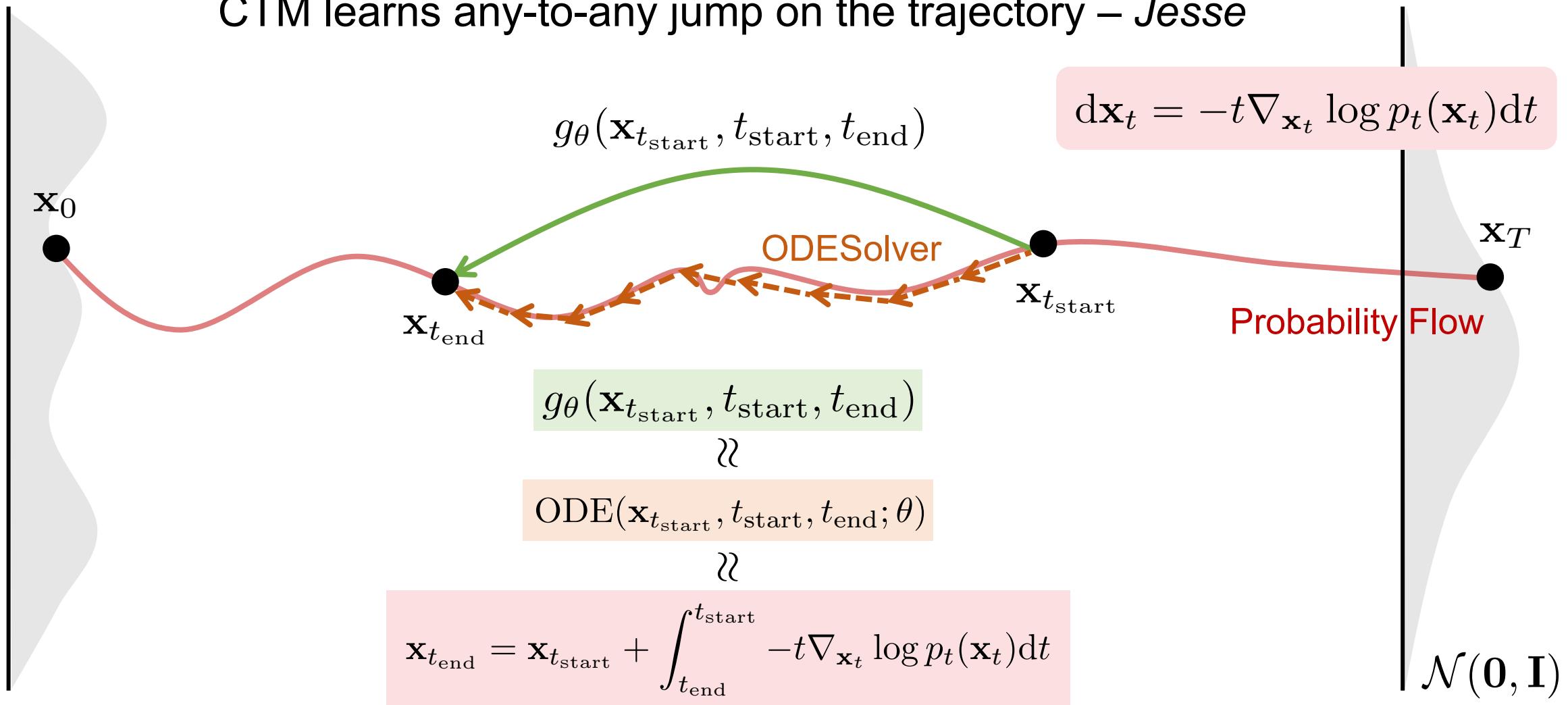


Sampling with CM

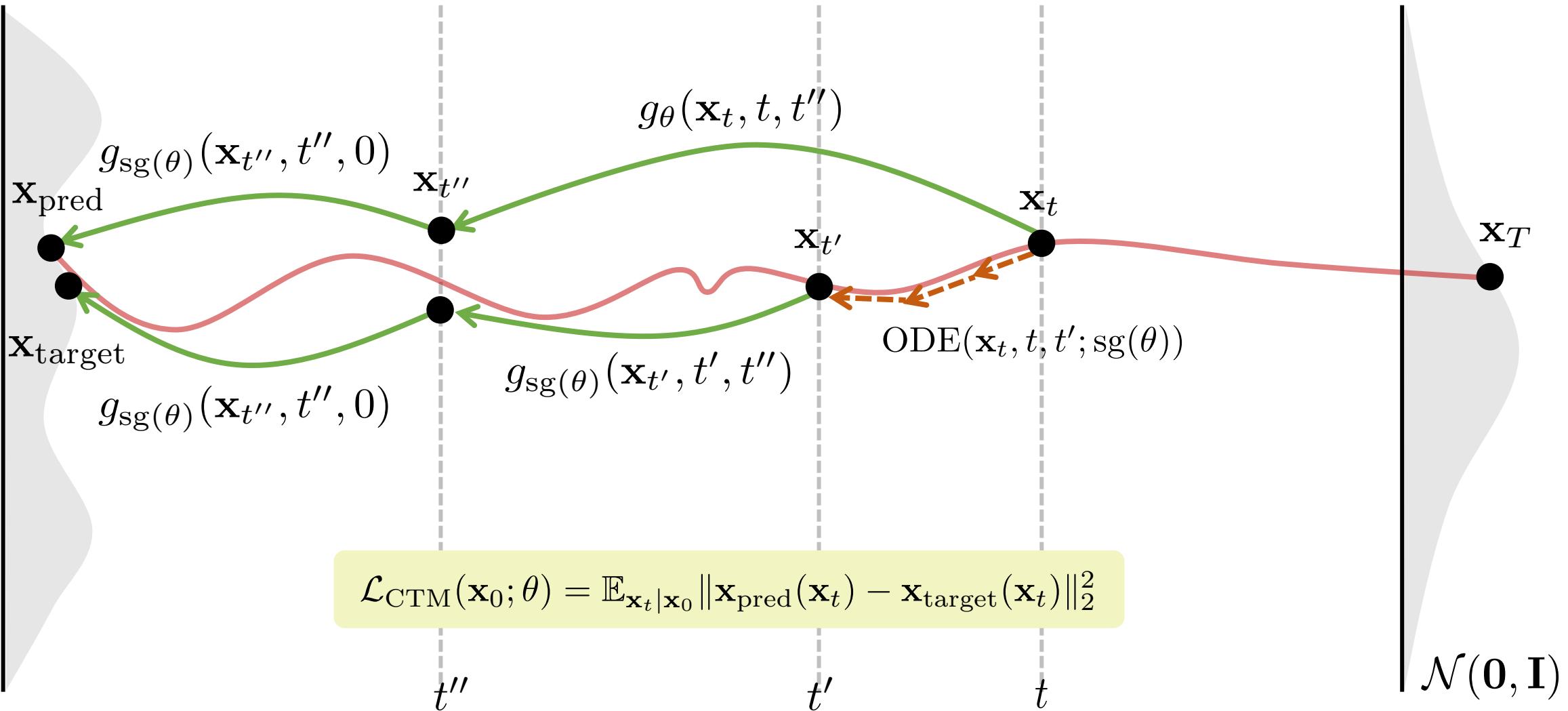


Consistency Trajectory Models (CTM) [Kim+ ICLR'24]

CTM learns any-to-any jump on the trajectory – Jesse



Training CTM



Experiment Results

Table 1: Sample quality on CIFAR-10. *Methods that require synthetic data construction for distillation.

METHOD	NFE (↓)	FID (↓)	IS (↑)
Diffusion + Samplers			
DDIM (Song et al., 2020)	50	4.67	
DDIM (Song et al., 2020)	20	6.84	
DDIM (Song et al., 2020)	10	8.23	
DPM-solver-2 (Lu et al., 2022)	10	5.94	
DPM-solver-fast (Lu et al., 2022)	10	4.70	
3-DEIS (Zhang & Chen, 2022)	10	4.17	
Diffusion + Distillation			
Knowledge Distillation* (Luhman & Luhman, 2021)	1	9.36	
DFNO* (Zheng et al., 2022)	1	4.12	
1-Rectified Flow (+distill)* (Liu et al., 2022)	1	6.18	9.08
2-Rectified Flow (+distill)* (Liu et al., 2022)	1	4.85	9.01
3-Rectified Flow (+distill)* (Liu et al., 2022)	1	5.21	8.79
PD (Salimans & Ho, 2022)	1	8.34	8.69
CD	1	3.55	9.48
PD (Salimans & Ho, 2022)	2	5.58	9.05
CD	2	2.93	9.75
Direct Generation			
BigGAN (Brock et al., 2019)	1	14.7	9.22
Diffusion GAN (Xiao et al., 2022)	1	14.6	8.93
AutoGAN (Gong et al., 2019)	1	12.4	8.55
E2GAN (Tian et al., 2020)	1	11.3	8.51
ViTGAN (Lee et al., 2021)	1	6.66	9.30
TransGAN (Jiang et al., 2021)	1	9.26	9.05
StyleGAN2-ADA (Karras et al., 2020)	1	2.92	9.83
StyleGAN-XL (Sauer et al., 2022)	1	1.85	
Score SDE (Song et al., 2021)	2000	2.20	9.89
DDPM (Ho et al., 2020)	1000	3.17	9.46
LSGM (Vahdat et al., 2021)	147	2.10	
PFGM (Xu et al., 2022)	110	2.35	9.68
EDM (Karras et al., 2022)	35	2.04	9.84
1-Rectified Flow (Liu et al., 2022)	1	378	1.13
Glow (Kingma & Dhariwal, 2018)	1	48.9	3.92
Residual Flow (Chen et al., 2019)	1	46.4	
GLFlow (Xiao et al., 2019)	1	44.6	
DenseFlow (Grcić et al., 2021)	1	34.9	
DC-VAE (Parmar et al., 2021)	1	17.9	8.20
CT	1	8.70	8.49
CT	2	5.83	8.85

Table 2: Sample quality on ImageNet 64 × 64, and LSUN Bedroom & Cat 256 × 256. †Distillation techniques.

METHOD	NFE (↓)	FID (↓)	Prec. (↑)	Rec. (↑)
ImageNet 64 × 64				
PD† (Salimans & Ho, 2022)	1	15.39	0.59	0.62
DFNO† (Zheng et al., 2022)	1	8.35		
CD†	1	6.20	0.68	0.63
PD† (Salimans & Ho, 2022)	2	8.95	0.63	0.65
CD†	2	4.70	0.69	0.64
ADM (Dhariwal & Nichol, 2021)	250	2.07	0.74	0.63
EDM (Karras et al., 2022)	79	2.44	0.71	0.67
BigGAN-deep (Brock et al., 2019)	1	4.06	0.79	0.48
CT	1	13.0	0.71	0.47
CT	2	11.1	0.69	0.56
LSUN Bedroom 256 × 256				
PD† (Salimans & Ho, 2022)	1	16.92	0.47	0.27
PD† (Salimans & Ho, 2022)	2	8.47	0.56	0.39
CD†	1	7.80	0.66	0.34
CD†	2	5.22	0.68	0.39
DDPM (Ho et al., 2020)	1000	4.89	0.60	0.45
ADM (Dhariwal & Nichol, 2021)	1000	1.90	0.66	0.51
EDM (Karras et al., 2022)	79	3.57	0.66	0.45
PGGAN (Karras et al., 2018)	1	8.34		
PG-SWGAN (Wu et al., 2019)	1	8.0		
TDPM (GAN) (Zheng et al., 2023)	1	5.24		
StyleGAN2 (Karras et al., 2020)	1	2.35	0.59	0.48
CT	1	16.0	0.60	0.17
CT	2	7.85	0.68	0.33
LSUN Cat 256 × 256				
PD† (Salimans & Ho, 2022)	1	29.6	0.51	0.25
PD† (Salimans & Ho, 2022)	2	15.5	0.59	0.36
CD†	1	11.0	0.65	0.36
CD†	2	8.84	0.66	0.40
DDPM (Ho et al., 2020)	1000	17.1	0.53	0.48
ADM (Dhariwal & Nichol, 2021)	1000	5.57	0.63	0.52
EDM (Karras et al., 2022)	79	6.69	0.70	0.43
PGGAN (Karras et al., 2018)	1	37.5		
StyleGAN2 (Karras et al., 2020)	1	7.25	0.58	0.43
CT	1	20.7	0.56	0.23
CT	2	11.7	0.63	0.36

Table 1: Performance comparisons on CIFAR-10⁹.

Model	NFE	Unconditional		Conditional
		FID↓	NLL↓	FID↓
GAN Models				
BigGAN (Brock et al., 2018)	1	8.51	X	-
StyleGAN-Ada (Karras et al., 2020)	1	2.92	X	2.42
StyleGAN-D2D (Kang et al., 2021)	1	-	X	2.26
StyleGAN-XL (Sauer et al., 2022)	1	-	X	1.85
Diffusion Models – Score-based Sampling				
DDPM (Ho et al., 2020)	1000	3.17	3.75	-
DDIM (Song et al., 2020a)	100	4.16	-	-
	10	13.36	-	-
Score SDE (Song et al., 2020a)	2000	2.20	3.45	-
VDM (Kingma et al., 2021)	1000	7.41	2.49	-
LSGM (Vahdat et al., 2021)	138	2.10	3.43	-
EDM (Karras et al., 2022)	35	2.01	2.56	1.82
Diffusion Models – Distillation Sampling				
KD (Luhman & Luhman, 2021)	1	9.36	X	-
DFNO (Zheng et al., 2023)	1	3.78	X	-
2-Rectified Flow (Liu et al., 2022)	1	4.85	X	-
PD (Salimans & Ho, 2021)	1	9.12	X	-
CD (official report) (Song et al., 2023)	1	3.55	X	-
CD (retrained)	1	10.53	X	-
CD + GAN (Lu et al., 2023)	1	2.65	X	-
CTM (ours)	1	1.98	2.43	1.73
Models without Pre-trained DM – Direct Generation				
PD (Salimans & Ho, 2021)	2	4.51	-	-
CD (Song et al., 2023)	2	2.93	-	-
CTM (ours)	2	1.87	2.43	1.63

Takeaway

- Diffusion models build a bridge between noise and data, forming a powerful generative modeling framework.
- Score-based models leverage SDE/ODE formulations and score functions to guide the reverse process.
- Variants like DDIM, CM, CTM offer trade-offs in speed, quality, and control.

Acknowledgement

Some concepts and insights in these slides are inspired by Yang Song and Jesse



[Yang Song](#)

Research Scientist at OpenAI



[Chieh-Hsin \(Jesse\) Lai](#)

Research Scientist at Sony AI

Reference

1. Jonathan Ho et al. Denoising Diffusion Probabilistic Models, *NeurIPS* 2020.
2. Jiaming Song et al. Denoising Diffusion Implicit Models, *ICLR* 2021.
3. Yang Song et al. Score-Based Generative Modeling through Stochastic Differential Equations, *ICLR* 2021.
4. Yang Song et al. Consistency Models, *ICML* 2023.
5. Dongjun Kim et al. Consistency Trajectory Models: Learning Probability Flow ODE Trajectory of Diffusion, *ICLR* 2024.

Thank you