



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI
DI PADOVA

Dipartimento di
Fisica e Astronomia
Galileo Galilei



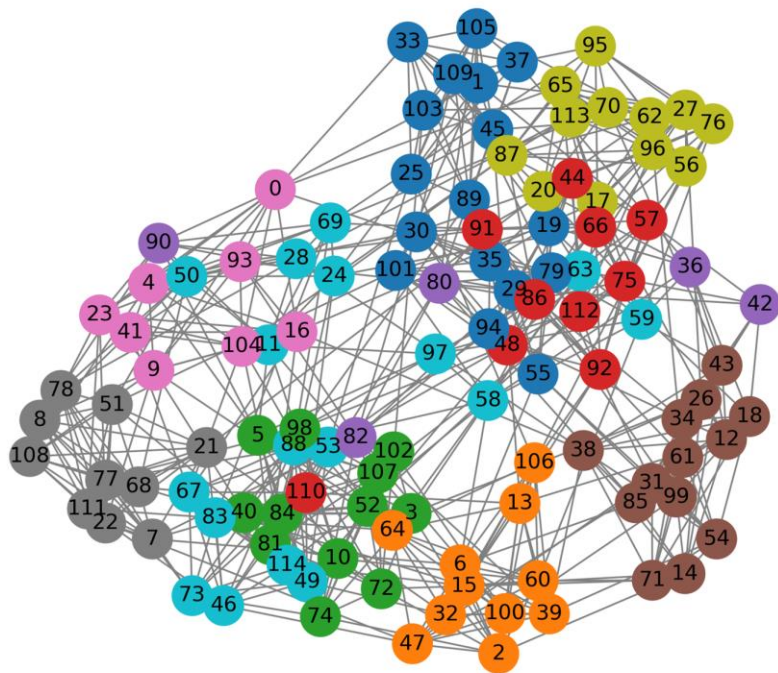
Community structures in complex networks

February 23, 2026

Information theory
and Inference

PROF. MICHELE ALLEGRA

RICCARDO CORTE
ALESSANDRO MIOTTO
LORENZO RIZZI



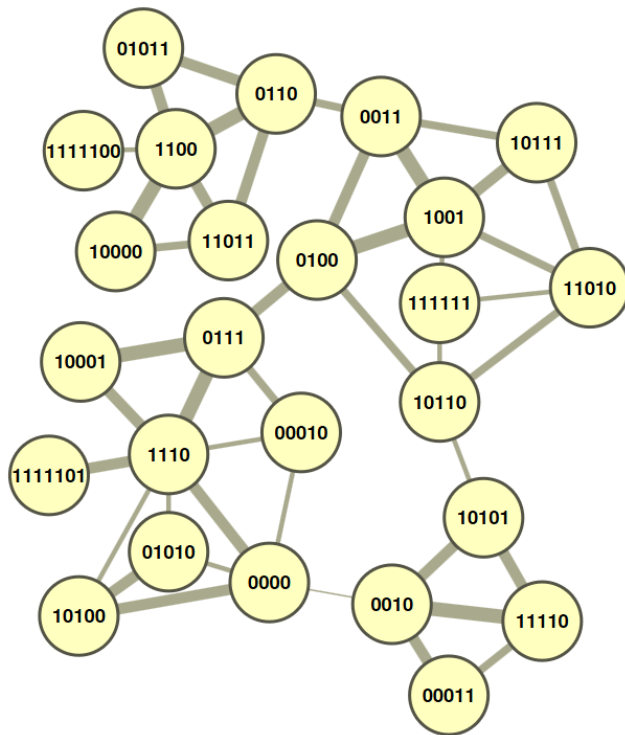
Goal: decompose the network into **modules** to reveals **community structure**



Information flow easily between nodes inside a well-connected module



compression problem for a random walker in the network



$L = 4.50$ bits/step

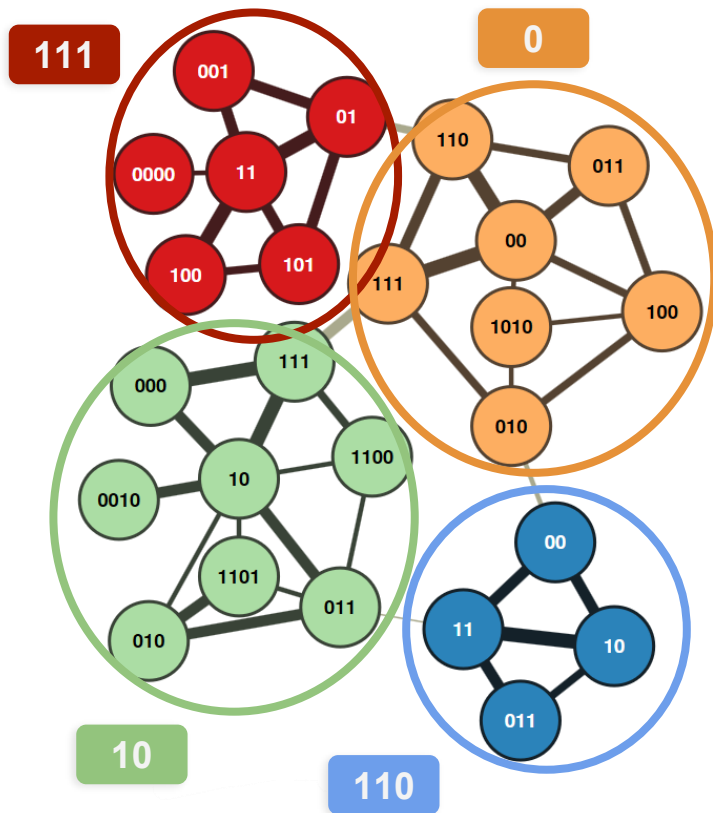
Shannon source code theorem

for symbolic coding

$$H[X] \leq L(E, X) \leq H[X] + 1$$

- ✓ **Huffman code** optimally assign prefix-free codewords to nodes
- ✗ Does **not** highlight aspect of the **underlying structure**

Introduction: two-levels description



Two-levels description

Modules
or clusters

$H(Q)$

unique names
for large-scale
objects

Nodes
within module
 $H(\mathcal{P}_i)$

reuse names
for fine-grade
details

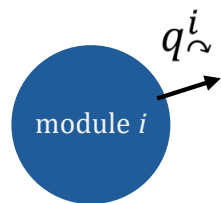
Huffman Code $L = 4.50$ bits/step
Two-level description $L = 3.05$ bits/step

The map equation

$$L(M) = q_{\sim} H(Q) + \sum_{i=1}^m p_{\cup}^i H(\mathcal{P}^i)$$

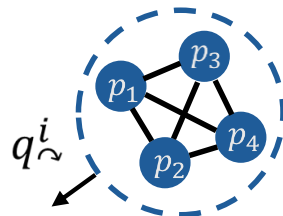


$$M^* = \arg \min_M L(M)$$



probability the
walker **switch**
module

$$q_{\sim} = \sum_{i=1}^m q_{\sim}^i$$



fraction of **within-module**
movements

$$p_{\cup}^i = q_{\sim}^i + \sum_{\alpha \in i} p_{\alpha}$$

$$L(M) = \underbrace{q_{\sim} \log q_{\sim} - 2 \sum_{i=1}^m q_{\sim}^i \log q_{\sim}^i}_{\text{movement between modules}} - \underbrace{\sum_{\alpha=1}^n p_{\alpha} \log p_{\alpha} + \sum_{\alpha=1}^n p_{\cup}^i \log p_{\cup}^i}_{\text{movement within modules}}$$

The map equation

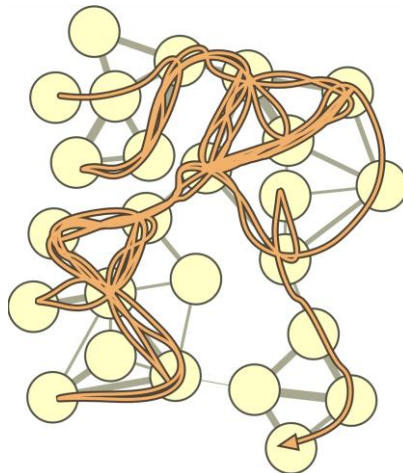
- Nodes visit frequency p_α

Random surfer: Markov Chain on the network with teleportation τ

ensure ergodicity (irreducible and aperiodic MC)

$$\mathcal{P} = \frac{\tau}{n} \mathbf{1}\mathbf{1}^T + (1 - \tau)A$$

$$\mathcal{P}\pi_{\text{stat}} = \pi_{\text{stat}}$$



→ **Power method**

$$\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \mathcal{P}^n \pi_0 = \pi_{\text{stat}}$$

→ **Eigen-equation**

$$\mathcal{P}\pi_{\text{stat}} = \pi_{\text{stat}}$$

→ **Pagerank algorithm**

Larry Page, Sergey Brin (1998)

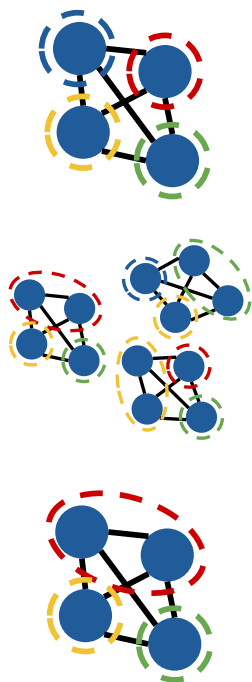
$$\tau = 0.15$$

- Module exit probability**

All the possible ways to
leave the module i

$$q_{\sim}^i = \underbrace{\tau \frac{n - n_i}{n - 1} \sum_{\alpha \in i} p_\alpha}_{\text{by teleportation}} + \underbrace{(1 - \tau) \sum_{\alpha \in i} \sum_{\beta \notin i} p_\alpha w_{\alpha\beta}}_{\text{by node connections}}$$

1. Greedy search



Start with **each node in its own module**



Consider **all possible pairs** of modules by merging them



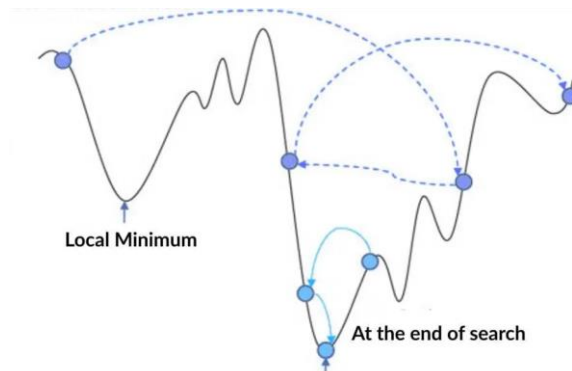
Select the merge that yields the largest **decrease in $L(M)$**

1. Simulated annealing

To **escape local minima** found by the greedy search

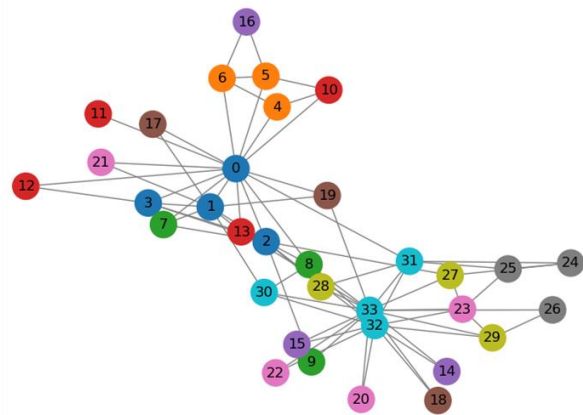
T_{ij} Proposal move: a node is **reassigned to a different module**

$$A_{ij} = \frac{1}{1 + e^{\Delta L_{ij}/T}} \quad \text{Acceptance rate: } \text{heat bath at temperature } T$$



Begin with a high T (explore high L states), then reduce T according to a cooling schedule

Example: Zachary's karate club

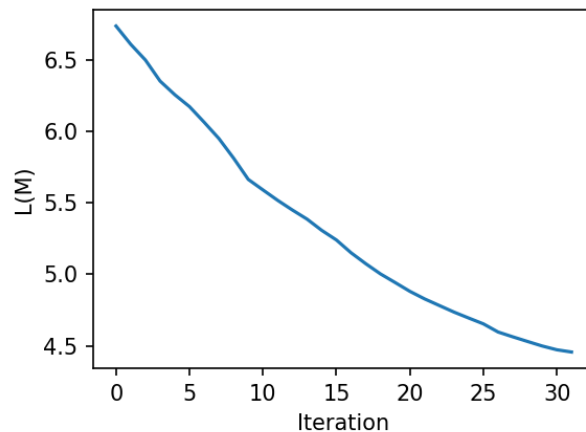


Initial partition

$L = 6.74$ bits/step

$m = 36$ modules

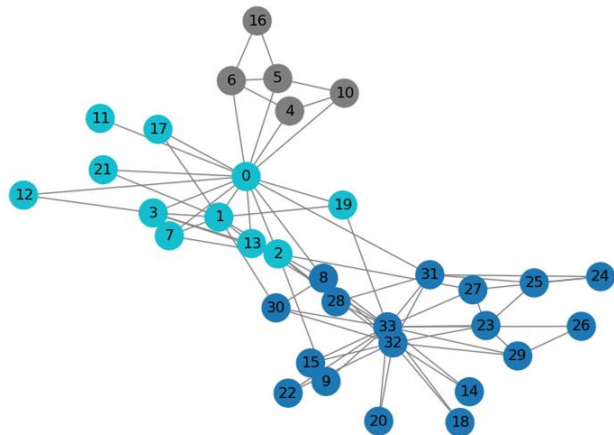
Greedy search
simulated annealing



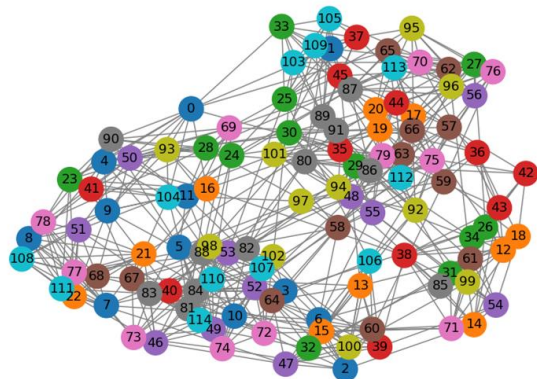
Final partition

$L = 4.46$ bits/step

$m = 3$ modules

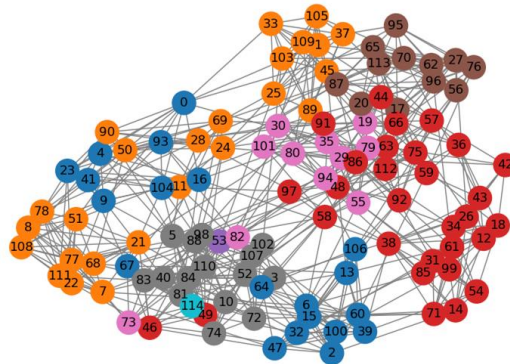


Example: football network



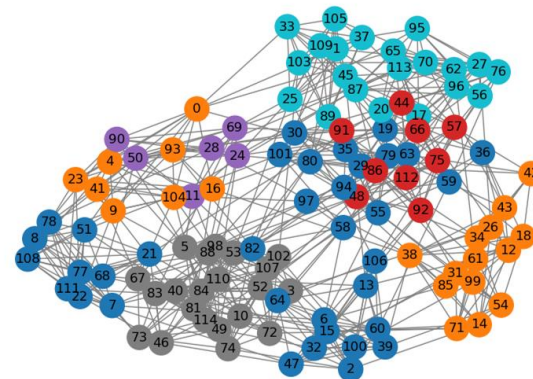
Initial partition

$L = 8.842$ bits/step
 $m = 115$ modules



Greedy merge

$L = 6.285$ bits/step
 $m = 15$ modules



Simulated Annealing

$L = 5.954$ bits/step
 $m = 12$ modules

ground truth $L = 6.154$ bits/step
 $m = 12$ modules

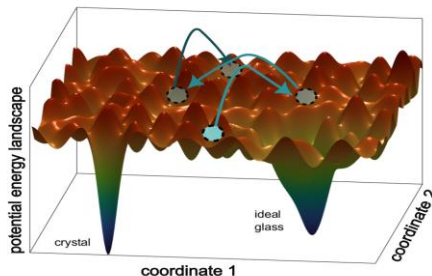
A slightly faster algorithm is the **Louvain procedure**

This a generic approach to find the partition minimizing/maximizing a generic **graph functional $H(G)$**

Initially proposed for **Newman Q modularity**

$$Q = \frac{1}{2m} \sum_{i,j=1}^N (A_{ij} - P_{ij}) \delta_{b_i, b_j}$$

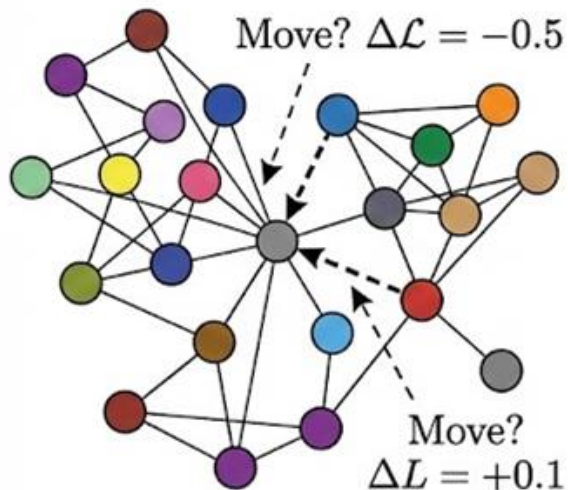
null hypothesis: $P_{ij} = \frac{k_i k_j}{2m}$



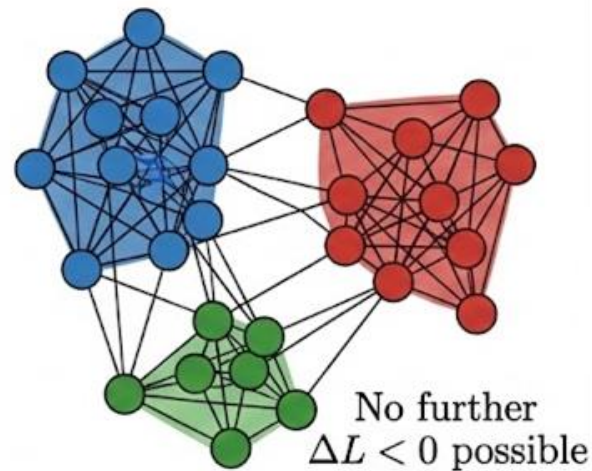
Local Optimization

Greedy phase

- 1 Start with **each node in its own module**
- 2 Try to **move a node to its neighbor module**
- 3 Select the move that **yields the largest decrease in $L(M)$**



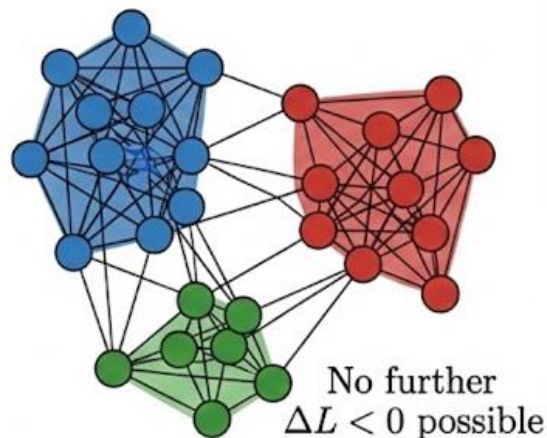
N.B. Random order!



Global Aggregation

Super-Nodes

Previous communities are collapsed into **super-nodes**



Internal
module links

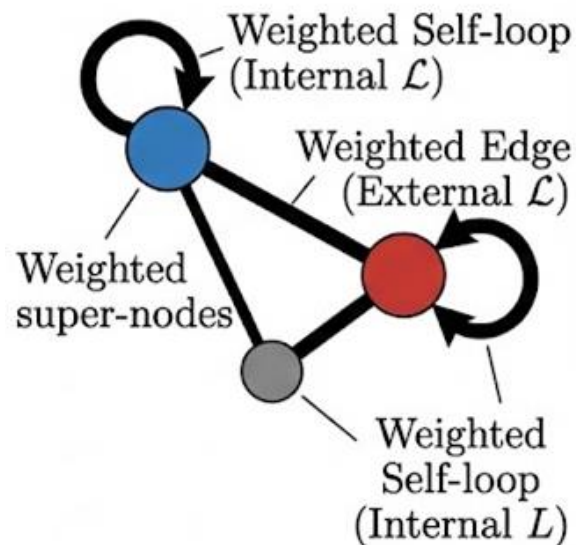


weighted
self-loop

connection
between different
communities

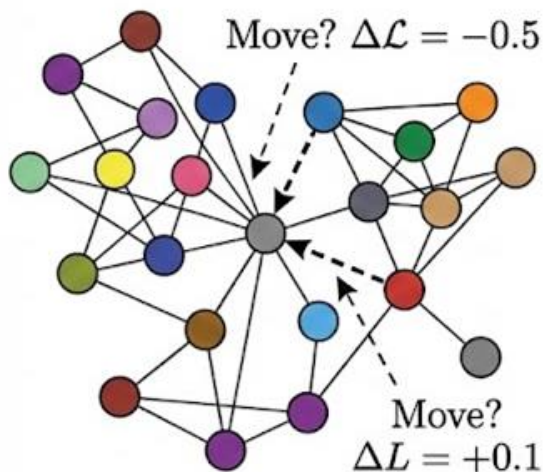


weighted **edges**
between super-nodes

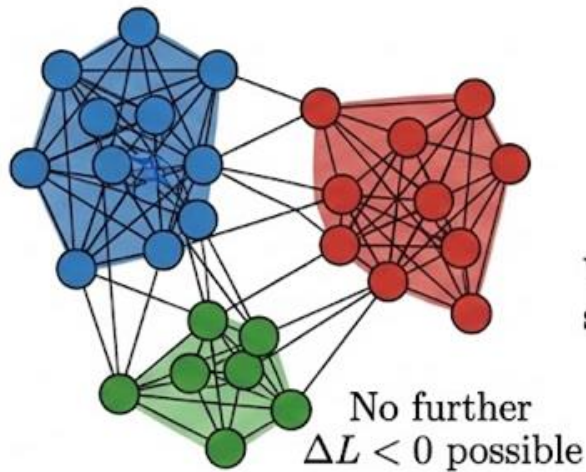


The Louvain Heuristic

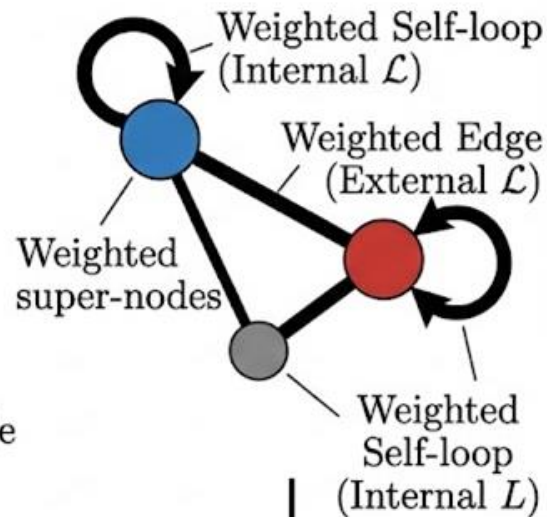
1. Initial State & Phase 1
(Local Optimization)



2. Phase 1 Result
(Stable Local Minimum)



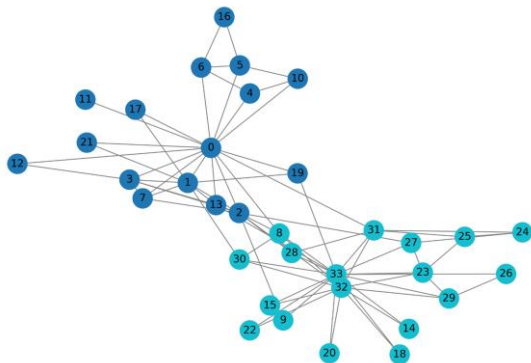
3. Phase 2
(Global Aggregation
& New Super-Graph)



Repeat on Reduced Graph

Example: Zachary's karate club

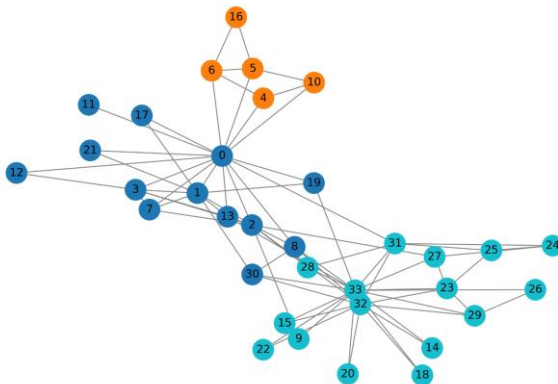
Louvain



$L = 4.547$ bits/step
 $m = 2$ modules

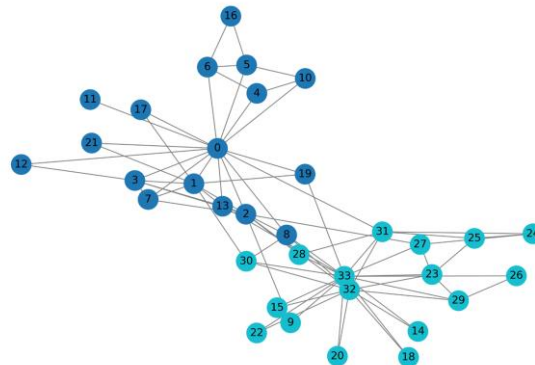
Louvain

Best over 100 runs



$L = 4.507$ bits/step
 $m = 3$ modules

Ground truth



$L = 4.589$ bits/step
 $m = 2$ modules

$$\text{NMI}(X, Y) = \frac{2 I(X:Y)}{H(X) + H(Y)}$$

Normalized mutual information

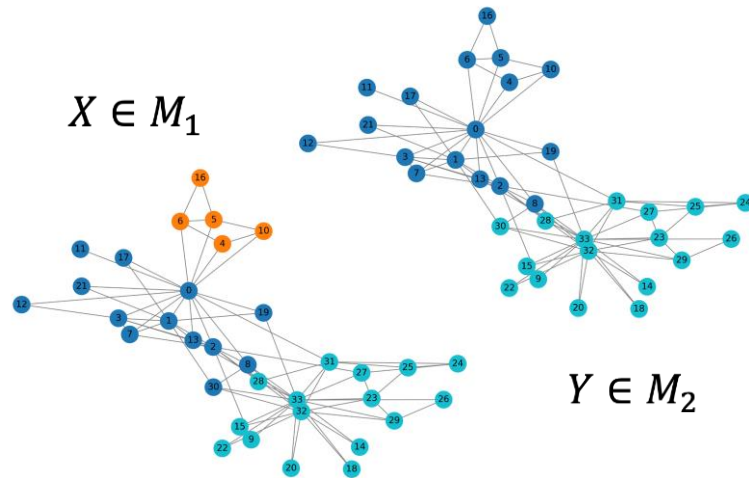


Metrics to quantify **similarities** between partitions

→ NMI = 1 if the partitions are identical $I(X:Y) = H(X) = H(Y)$

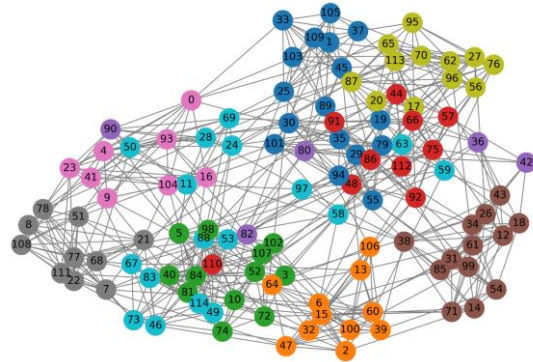
→ NMI = 0 the partitions are independent $I(X:Y) = 0$

*NMI works by asking **how efficiently** we can describe one labeling if we know the other. It measures **how much less information** it takes to communicate the first labeling if we know the second*



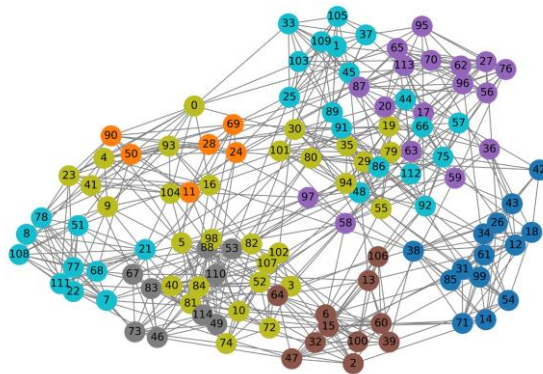
X, Y random variables of which partition a random node is selected

Example: football network



Ground truth

$L = 6.154$ bits/step

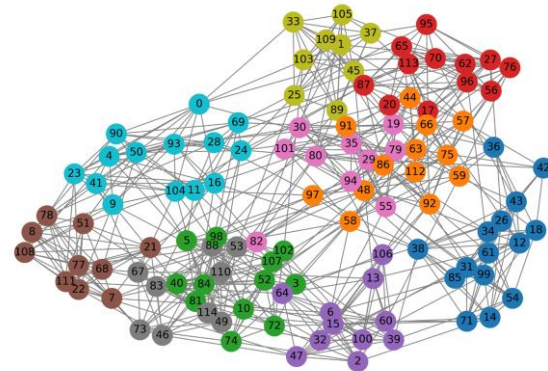


Louvain Algorithm

our implementation

$L = 5.954$ bits/step

$NMI = 0.9242$



InfoMap

*optimize implementation by
mapequation.org*

$L = 5.465$ bits/step

$NMI = 0.9114$

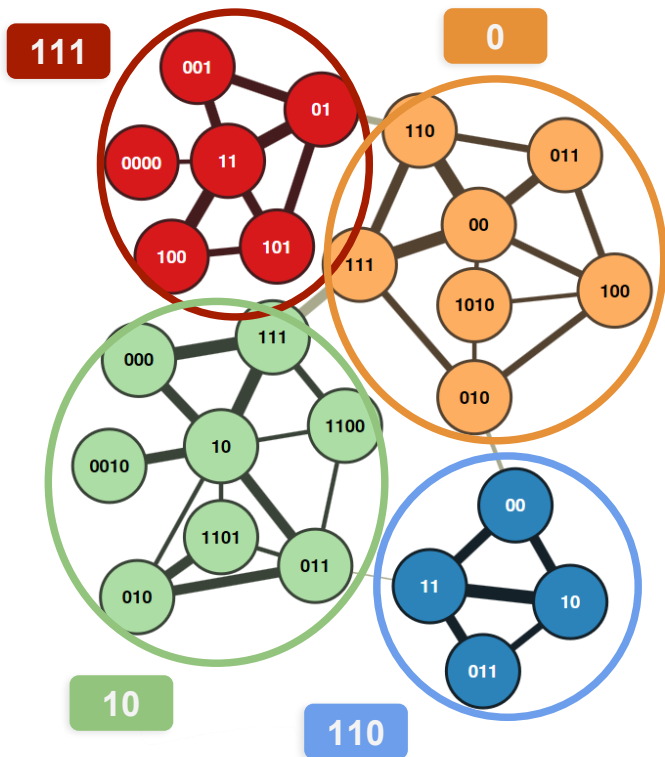
*Between the two
implementations*

$NMI = 0.9744$

Example: even bigger networks

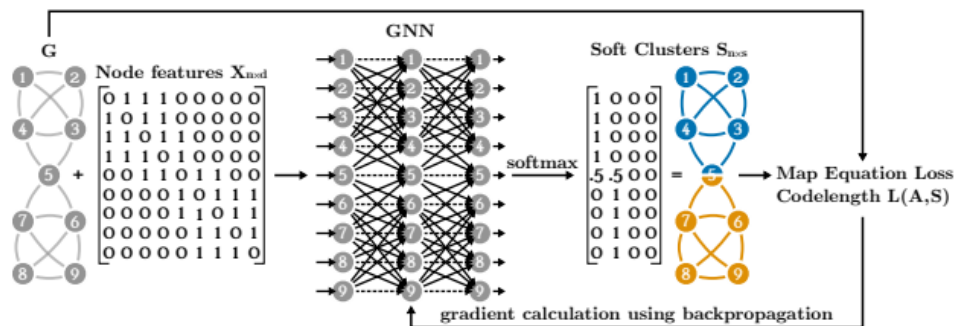
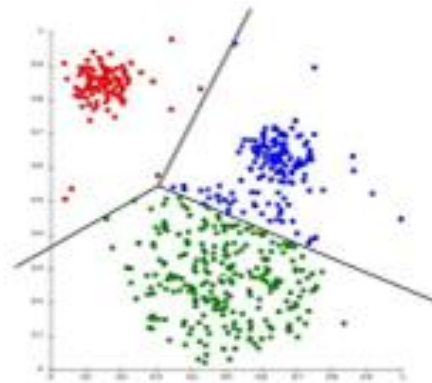
	Time (s)	NMI	L (bits)	m
Ground truth	-	-	10.145	7
Louvain	465.49	0.4136	7.2390	293
InfoMap	0.06	0.4082	7.2332	277

**Network with 2708 nodes
and 5278 edges**



From Infomap

To Machine Learning Methods



Map Equation Formulation

From an *hard partition* to
a *soft cluster matrix*
representation

$$L(M) = qH(Q) + \sum_{m \in M} p_m H(P_m)$$



$$L(M) = q \log_2 q - \sum_{m \in M} q_m \log_2 q_m - \sum_{m \in M} m_{\text{exit}} \log_2 m_{\text{exit}} - \sum_{u \in V} p_u \log_2 p_u + \sum_{m \in M} p_m \log_2 p_m$$

movement *between* modules

movement *within* modules

From the Network to the Map equation

Adjacency Matrix A

Feature Matrix X



Logits definition

$$z = f_{\theta}(A, X)$$

$$S = \text{softmax}(z/T)$$

q: total probability of **exiting modules** (inter-module flow)

q_m: **exiting probability** of each module

p_m: total probability mass **inside** module m

m_exit: module exit distribution derived from q_m

Visit rates:

Stationary distribution p

Transition matrix T

$$p^{(t+1)} = \alpha \frac{d_{in}}{w_{tot}} + (1 - \alpha)p^{(t)}T$$



Flow Matrix:

$$F = \alpha \frac{A}{w_{tot}} + (1 - \alpha) \text{diag}(p) T$$

From nodes flow matrix to Module flow matrix:

$$C = S.T @ F @ S$$



$$q = \sum_{m \neq n} c_{mn}$$

$$q_m = \sum_{n \neq m} c_{mn}$$

$$p_m = \sum_n c_{mn}$$

q: total probability of **exiting modules** (inter-module flow)

q_m: **exiting probability** of each module

p_m: total probability mass **inside** module m

m_exit: module exit distribution derived from q_m

From the Network to the Map equation

From nodes flow matrix
to Module flow matrix:

$$C = S.T @ F @ S$$



$$q = \sum_{m \neq n} c_{mn}$$

$$q_m = \sum_{n \neq m} c_{mn}$$

$$p_m = \sum_n c_{mn}$$

$$\theta^* = \arg \min_{\theta} L(S(\theta))$$

$$\theta \rightarrow z \rightarrow S \rightarrow L$$

q: total probability of **exiting modules** (inter-module flow)

q_m: **exiting probability** of each module

p_m: total probability mass **inside** module m

m_exit: module exit distribution derived from q_m

Models used to parametrize Partitions

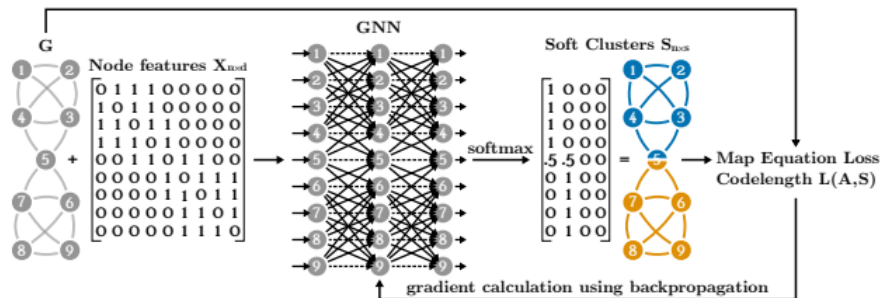
Forward(A,x)



Logits



S



Linear:

$$Z = XW$$

MLP:

$$Z = \text{MLP}(X)$$

GNN:

$$Z = \text{GNN}(A, X)$$

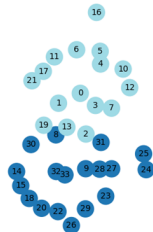
Simple environment Implementation:



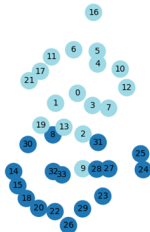
Entropy Implementation:

$$L_{train} = L_{Neuromap} - \lambda H(S)$$

Karate — Neuromap Linear (+entropy)



Karate — Neuromap MLP (+entropy)



Karate — Neuromap GCN (+entropy)

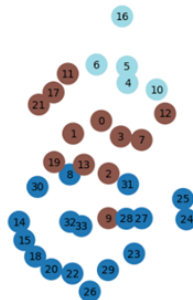


Example: Zachary's karate club

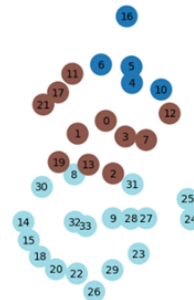
Ground truth



Infomap



Linear



GCN



MLP

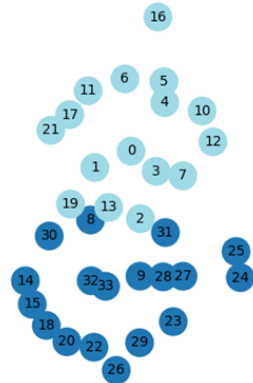


Ground truth

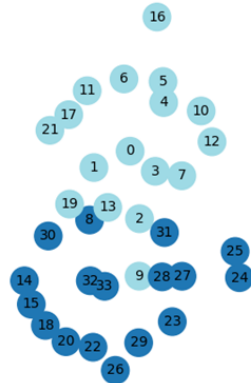


Example: Zachary's karate club

Karate — Neuomap Linear (+entropy)



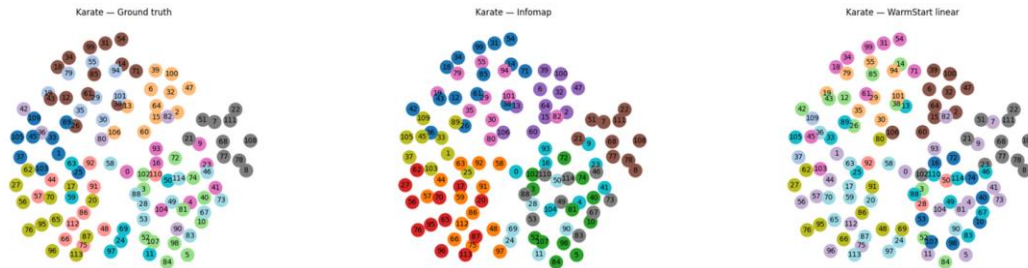
Karate — Neuomap MLP (+entropy)



Karate — Neuomap GCN (+entropy)



Simple environment Implementation:

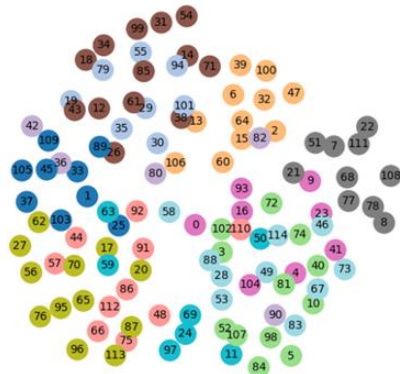


Authors Implementation:

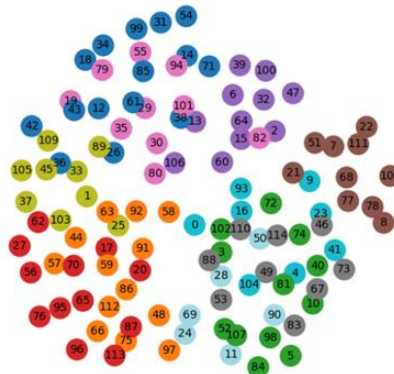


Example: football network

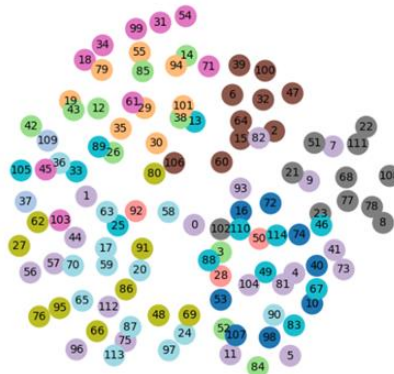
Karate — Ground truth



Karate — Infomap



Karate — WarmStart linear



Example: football network

Ground truth



Linear (trial 1) $|M|=4$



MLP (trial 1) $|M|=6$



GCN (trial 1) $|M|=8$



GIN (trial 1) $|M|=6$



SAGE (trial 1) $|M|=8$

