

# What Can Neural Networks Reason About?

## ICLR 2020 Spotlight

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# Future of AI - Reasoning, beyond pattern recognition

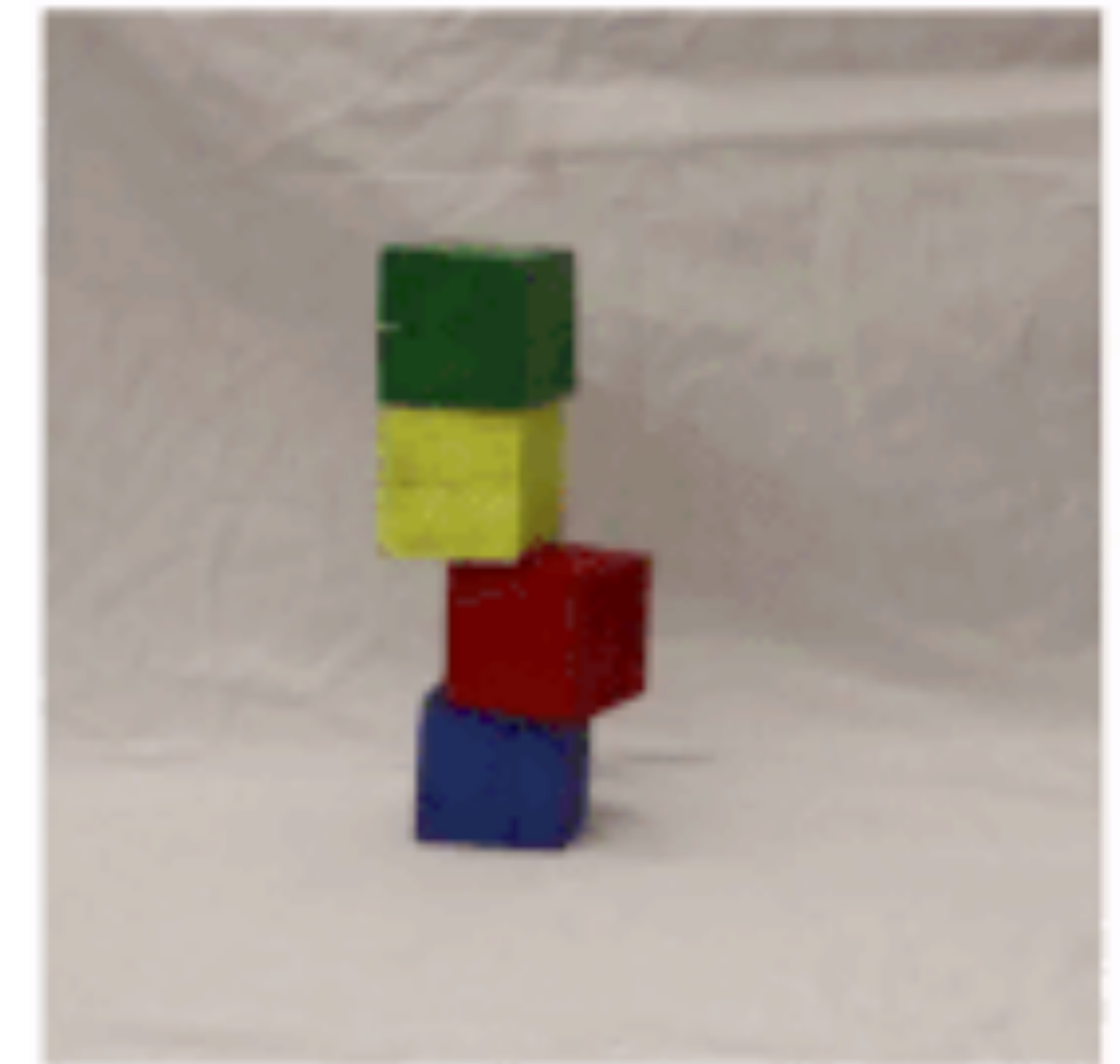


**Pattern recognition**  
for perception

*Learn  
features*

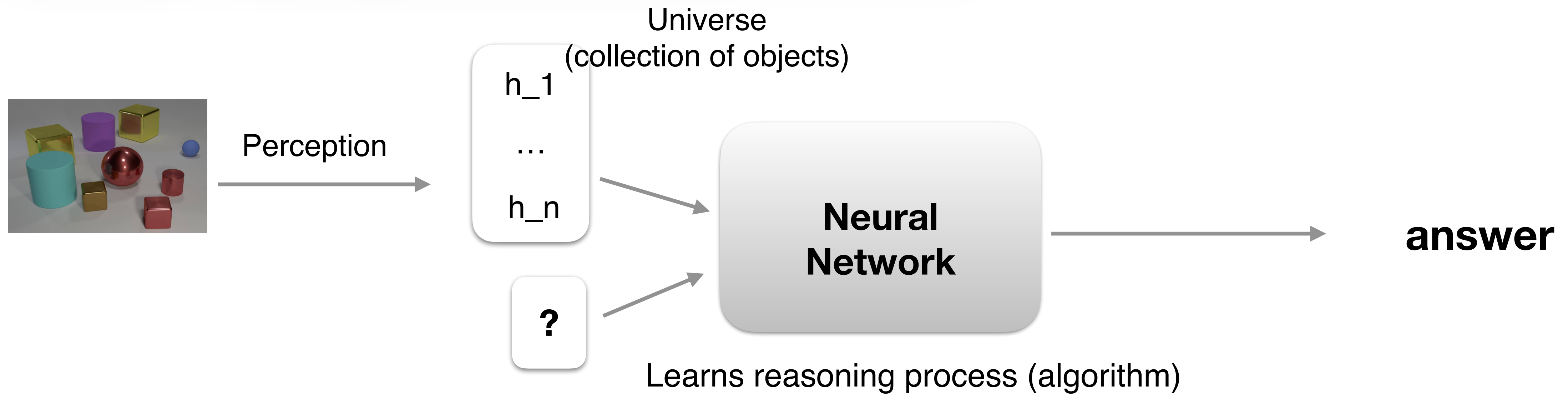


*Learn reasoning  
process*



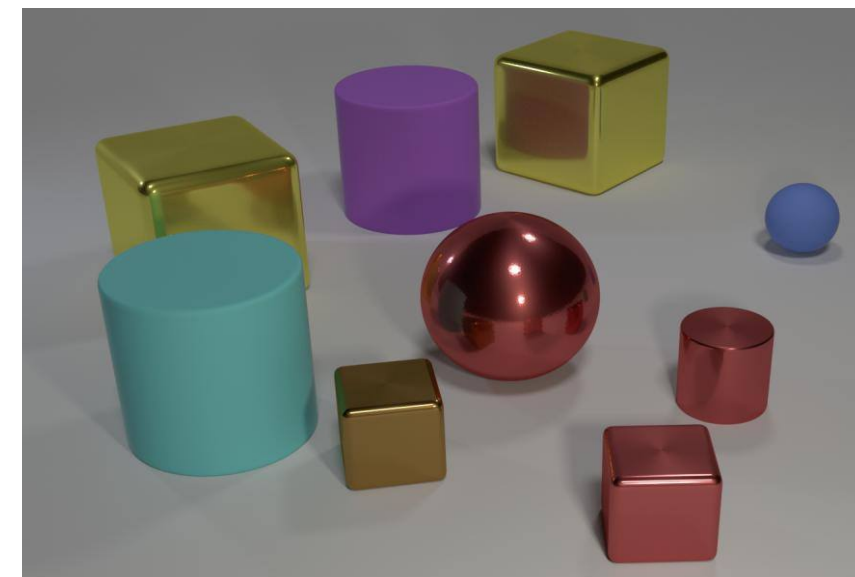
**Reason about**  
movement of blocks

# Reasoning tasks



*Summary statistics*

What is the maximum value difference among treasures?



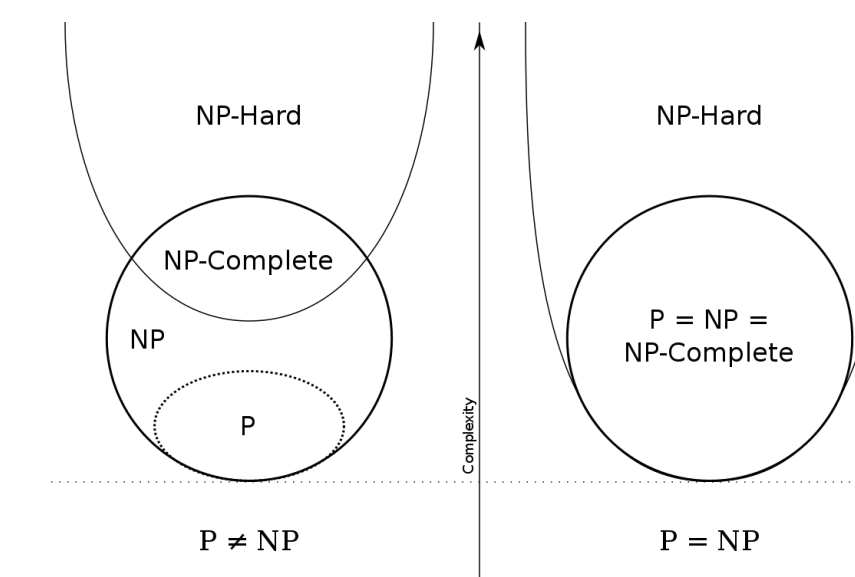
*Relational argmax*

What are the colors of the furthest pair of objects?



*Dynamic programming*

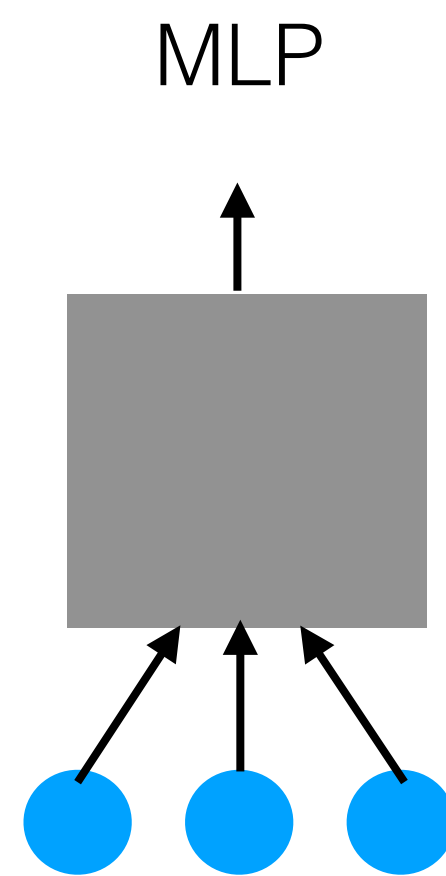
What is the cost to defeat monster X by following the optimal path?



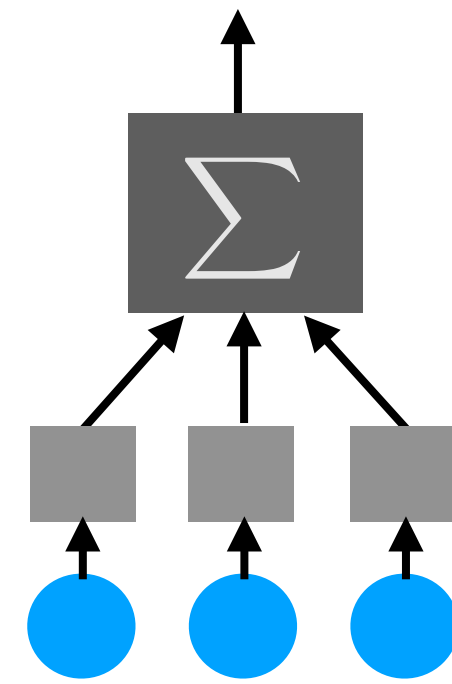
*NP-hard problem*

Subset sum: Is there a subset that sums to 0?

# Challenge for NNs to learn reasoning

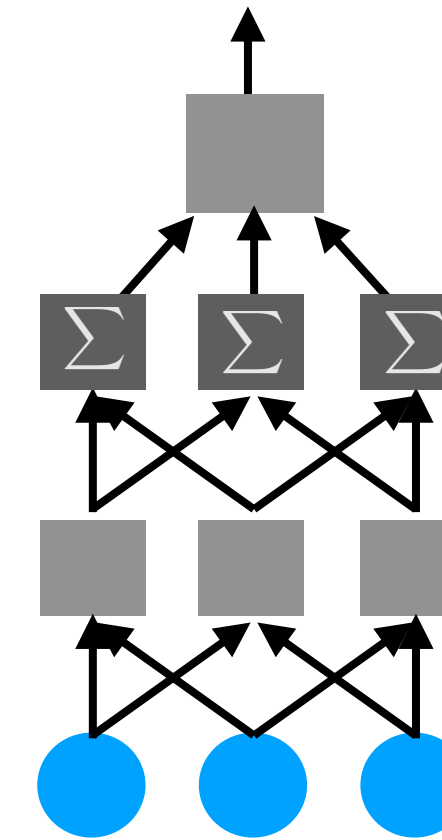


Deep Sets  
(Zaheer et al 2017)



$$y = \text{MLP}_2 \left( \sum_{s \in S} \text{MLP}_1(X_s) \right)$$

Graph Neural Network  
(GNN)



$$h_s^{(k+1)} = \sum_{t \in S} \text{MLP}_1^{(k)}(h_s^{(k)}, h_t^{(k)}) \quad y = \text{MLP}_2 \left( \sum_{s \in S} h_s^{(K)} \right)$$

**Lemma** MLP, Graph Neural Network (GNN), DeepSet all can **universally approximate reasoning algorithms**.

Equivalent universal expressive power,  
BUT big difference in **generalization**

# Algorithmic alignment

## Inductive bias of architectures formally defined.

See paper for mathematical definition.

### Graph Neural Network

for  $k = 1 \dots$  GNN iter:

for  $u$  in  $S$ :

$$h_u^{(k)} = \sum_v \text{MLP}(h_v^{(k-1)}, h_u^{(k-1)})$$

*No need to learn for-loops*

### Bellman-Ford algorithm

for  $k = 1 \dots |S| - 1$ :

for  $u$  in  $S$ :

$$d[k][u] = \min_v d[k-1][v] + \text{cost}(v, u)$$

*Learns a simple reasoning step*



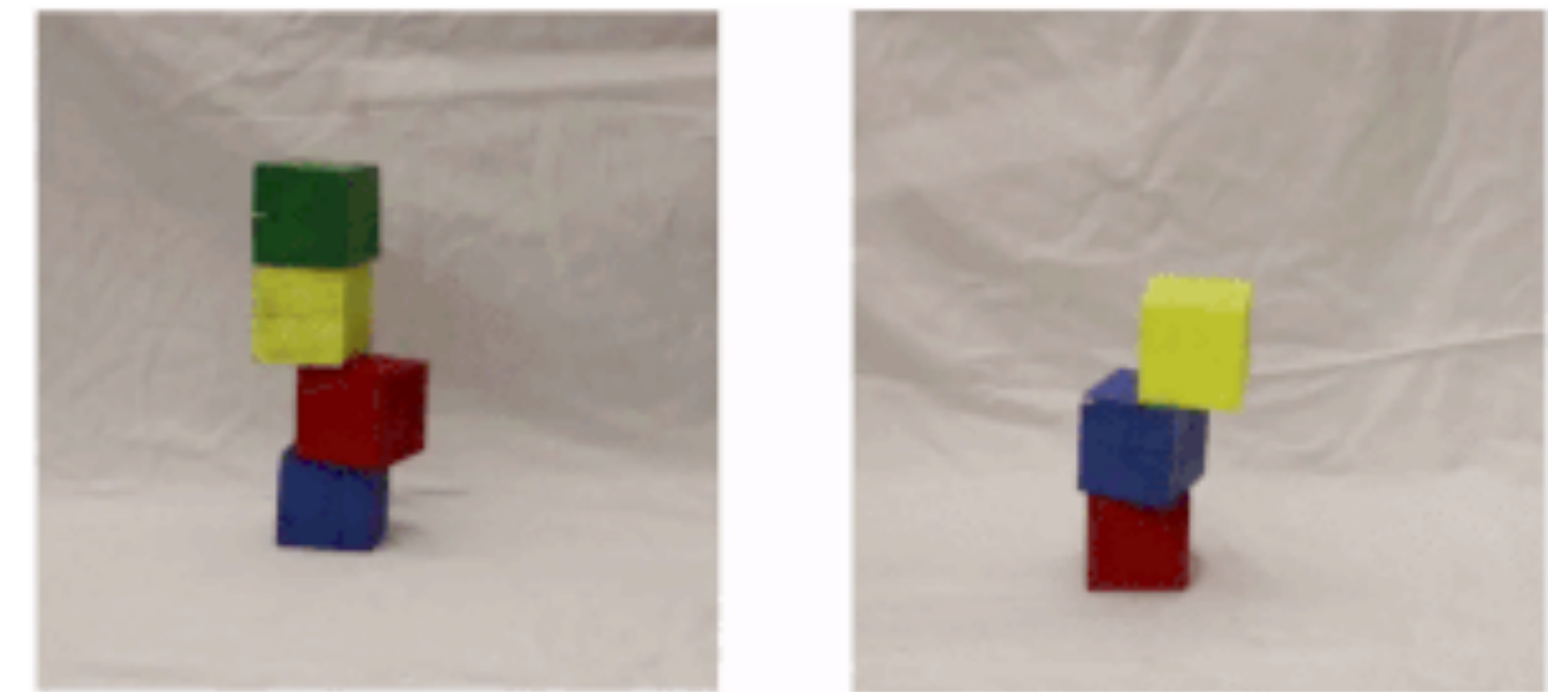
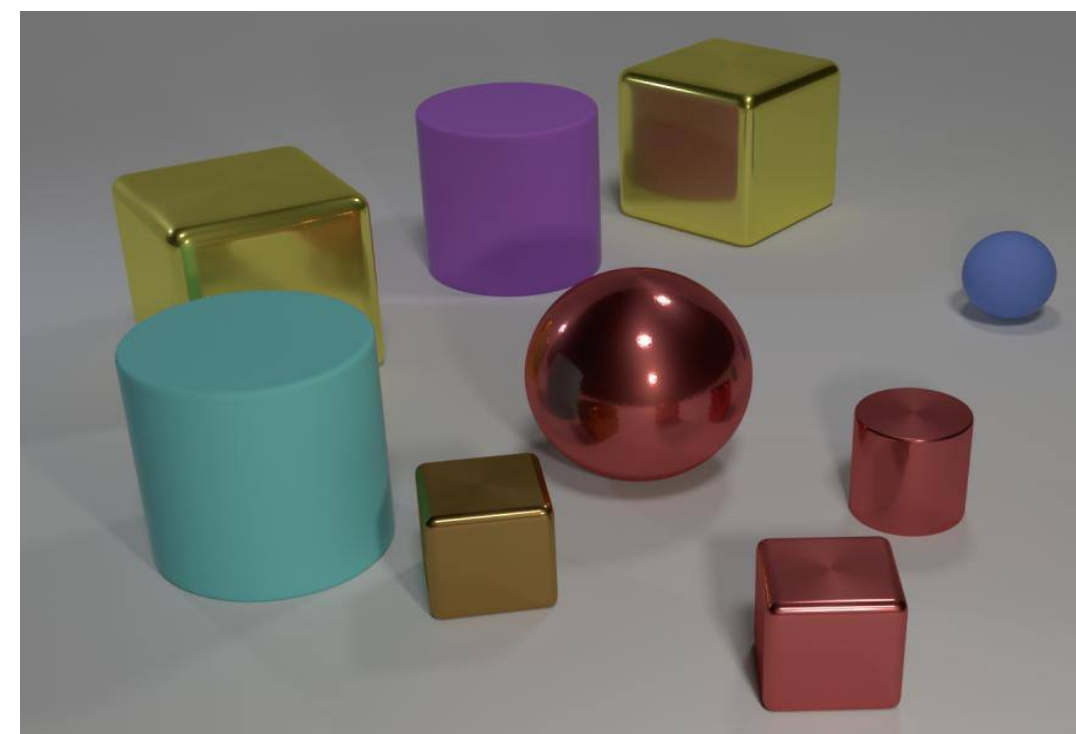
**Theorem.** Better algorithmic alignment implies better generalization.

# DP (GNN) solves many reasoning tasks

More generally: GNNs algorithmically align with Dynamic Programming

$$\text{Answer}[k][i] = \text{DP-Update}(\{\text{Answer}[k-1][j], j = 1 \dots n\})$$

$$h_s^{(k)} = \sum_{t \in S} \text{MLP}_1^{(k)} \left( h_s^{(k-1)}, h_t^{(k-1)} \right)$$



## Shortest Path & Graph Algorithms

What is the cost to defeat monster X by following the optimal path?

## Visual Question Answering

Starting at object X, if each time we jump to the closest object, which object is K jumps away?

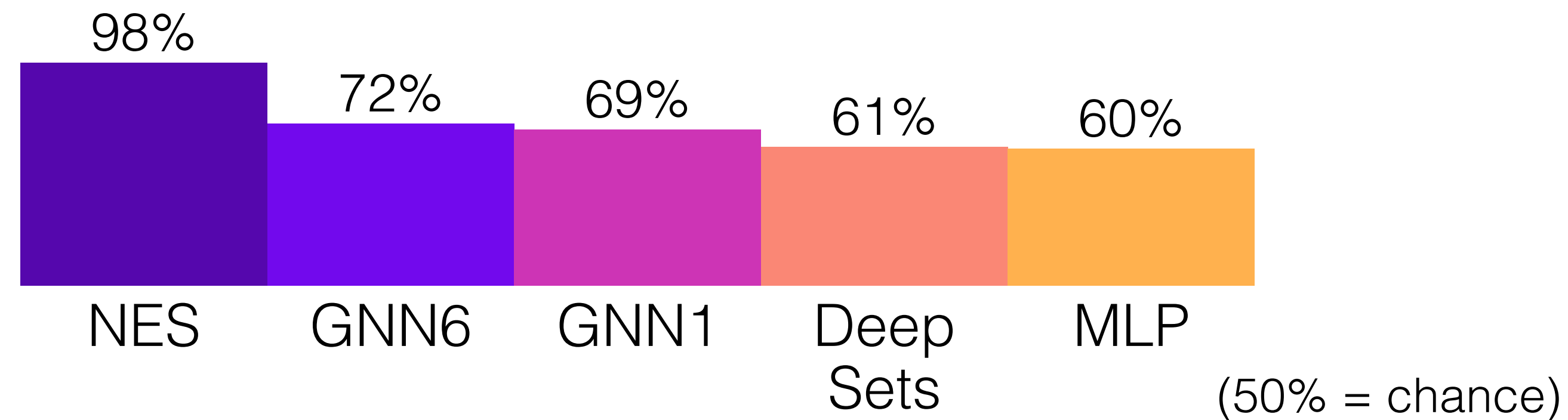
## Physical Reasoning

What are the states of the blocks in a second?

# Limits of GNN: NP-hard problem (e.g. subset sum)

5 -1 10 -8 7 9 -11 -2 4 3 ...

Does any subset of these numbers sum to zero?



**NES** (Neural Exhaustive Search) - based on **algo alignment**

$$\text{MLP}_2(\max_{\tau \subseteq S} \text{MLP}_1 \circ \text{LSTM}(X_1, \dots, X_{|\tau|} : X_1, \dots, X_{|\tau|} \in \tau))$$

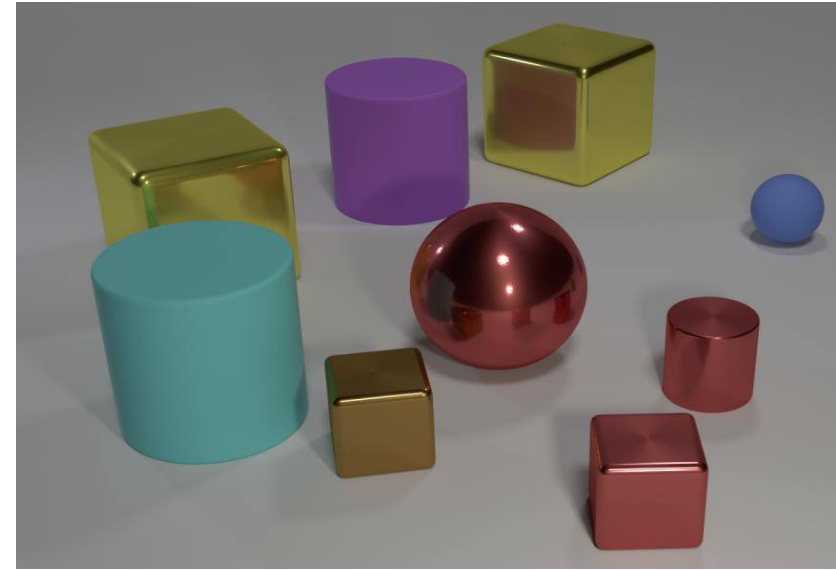
$$y = \max_S 1[h(S) = 0], \quad h(S) = \sum_{x \in S} X$$

# What can neural networks reason about?



*Summary statistics*

What is the maximum value difference among treasures?



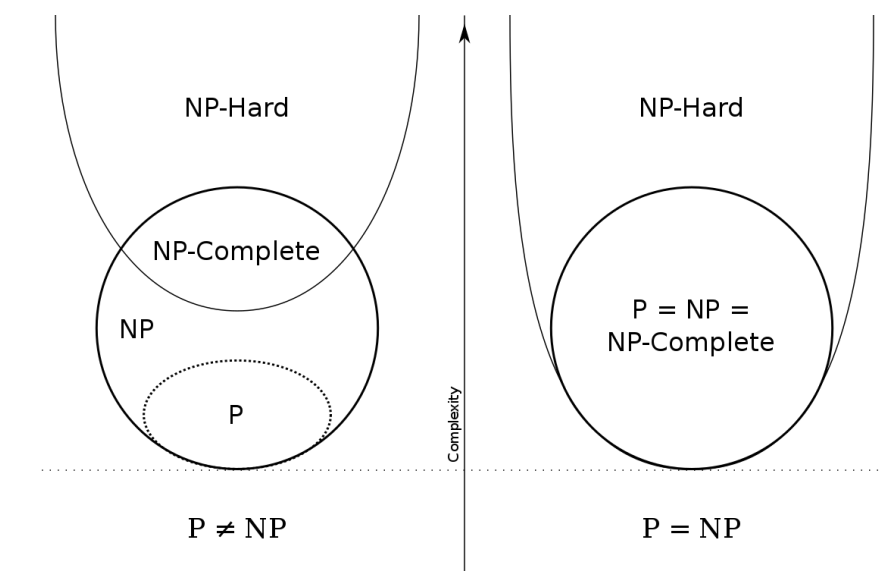
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*Dynamic programming*

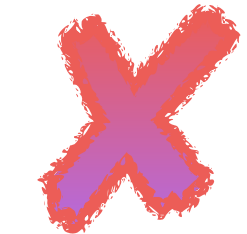
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*NP-hard problem*

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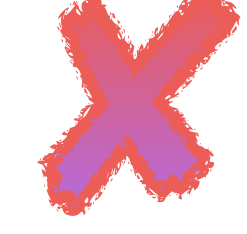
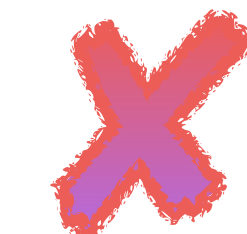
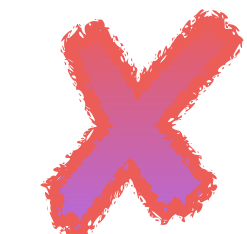
**Graph Neural Network**  
(GNN)



**DeepSets**



**MLP**



**Neural Exhaustive Search**  
(NES)





# Summary of authors

<https://openreview.net/forum?id=rJxbJeHFPS>

<https://github.com/NNReasoning/What-Can-Neural-Networks-Reason-About>



Keyulu Xu

超絶弱い主人公

The weakest character



Stefanie Jegelka

機械学習の女帝

The Last Jedi of ML



Mozhi Zhang

NLPの魔法使い

Sorcerer of NLP



Simon S. Du

深層学習理論の四天王

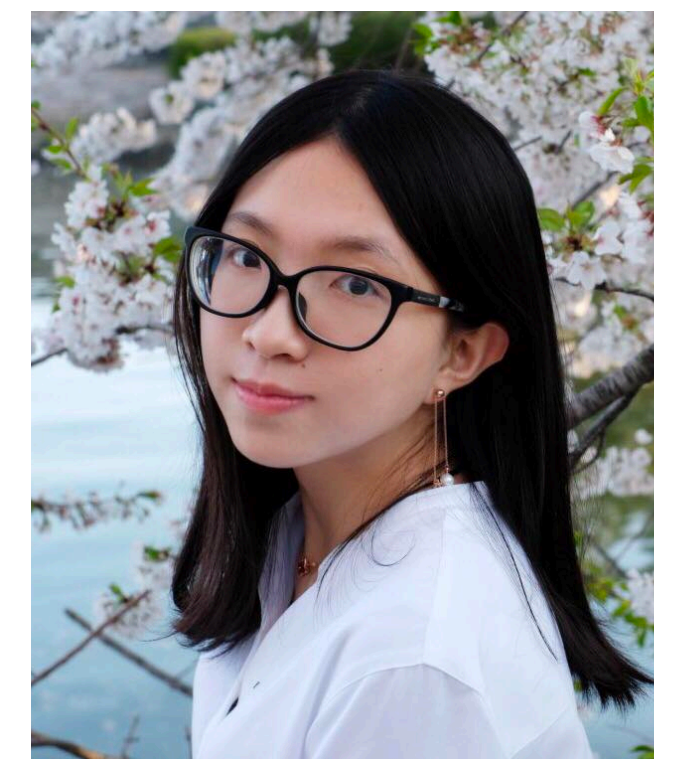
Bishop of DL theory



Ken-ichi Kawarabayashi

史上最強のグラフ理論の大魔王

King of Graph Theory



Jingling Li

AGIを夢見る少女

AGI dreamer