

Explorations of Fully Gauge-Fixed $SU(2)$

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They/Them



InQubator for
Quantum Simulation

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Studying the properties of strongly coupled theories from first principles is necessary to fully understand the Standard Model

Rich phenomena of non-perturbative quantum field theories is a profitable place to look for new answers to the big questions

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- Gives rise to complex array of emergent phenomena that cannot be identified from underlying degrees of freedom
- *Ab-initio* calculations crucial for comparing theoretical predictions of the Standard Model to experimental results

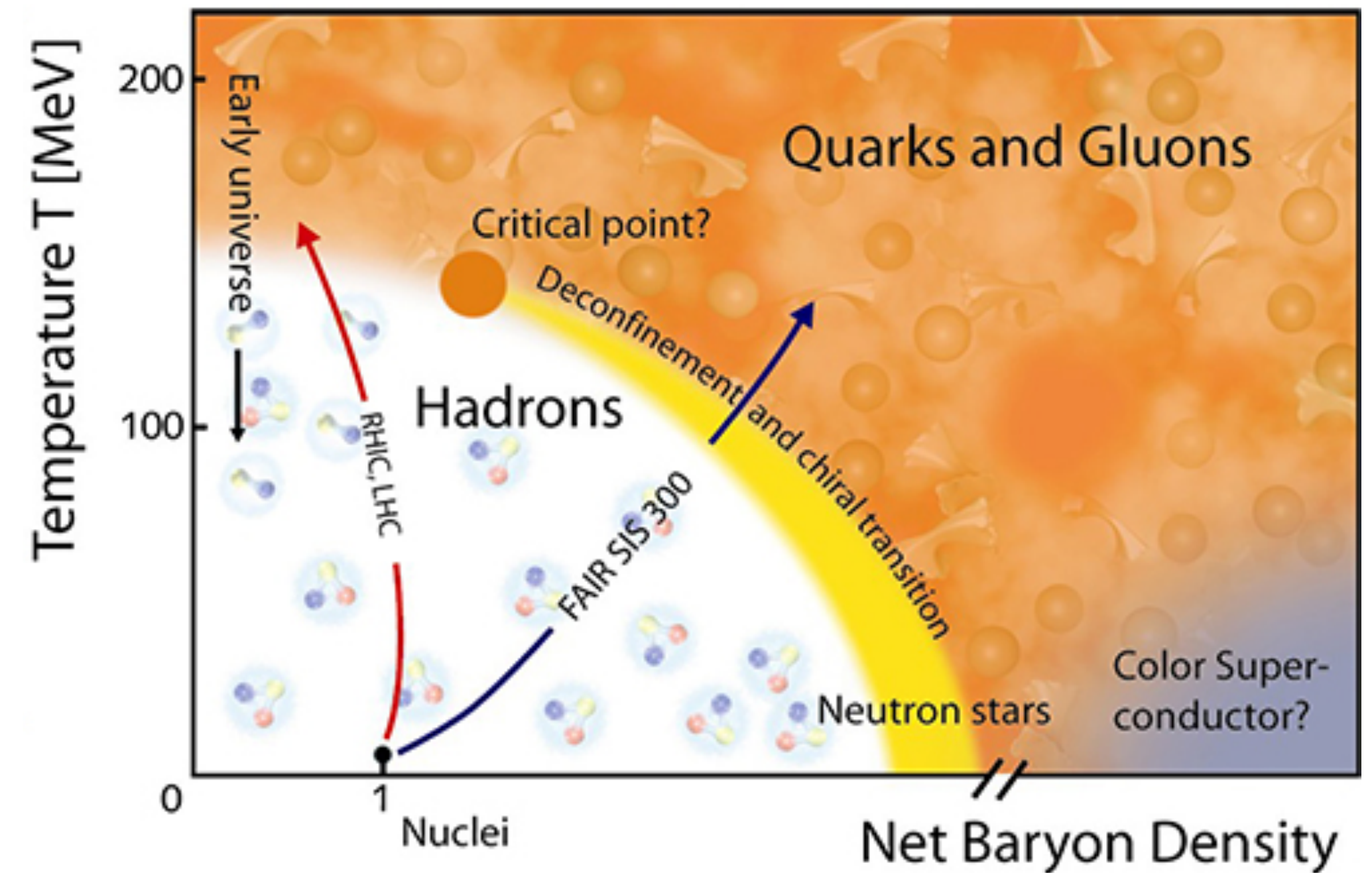
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Proposed QCD Phase Diagram

Hamiltonian Lattice Gauge Theory, Abelian

Quantum simulations utilize Hamiltonian formulations

- Continuous time, but discrete space
- Use Weyl Gauge ($A_0 = 0$)
- Can be derived from Wilson's action

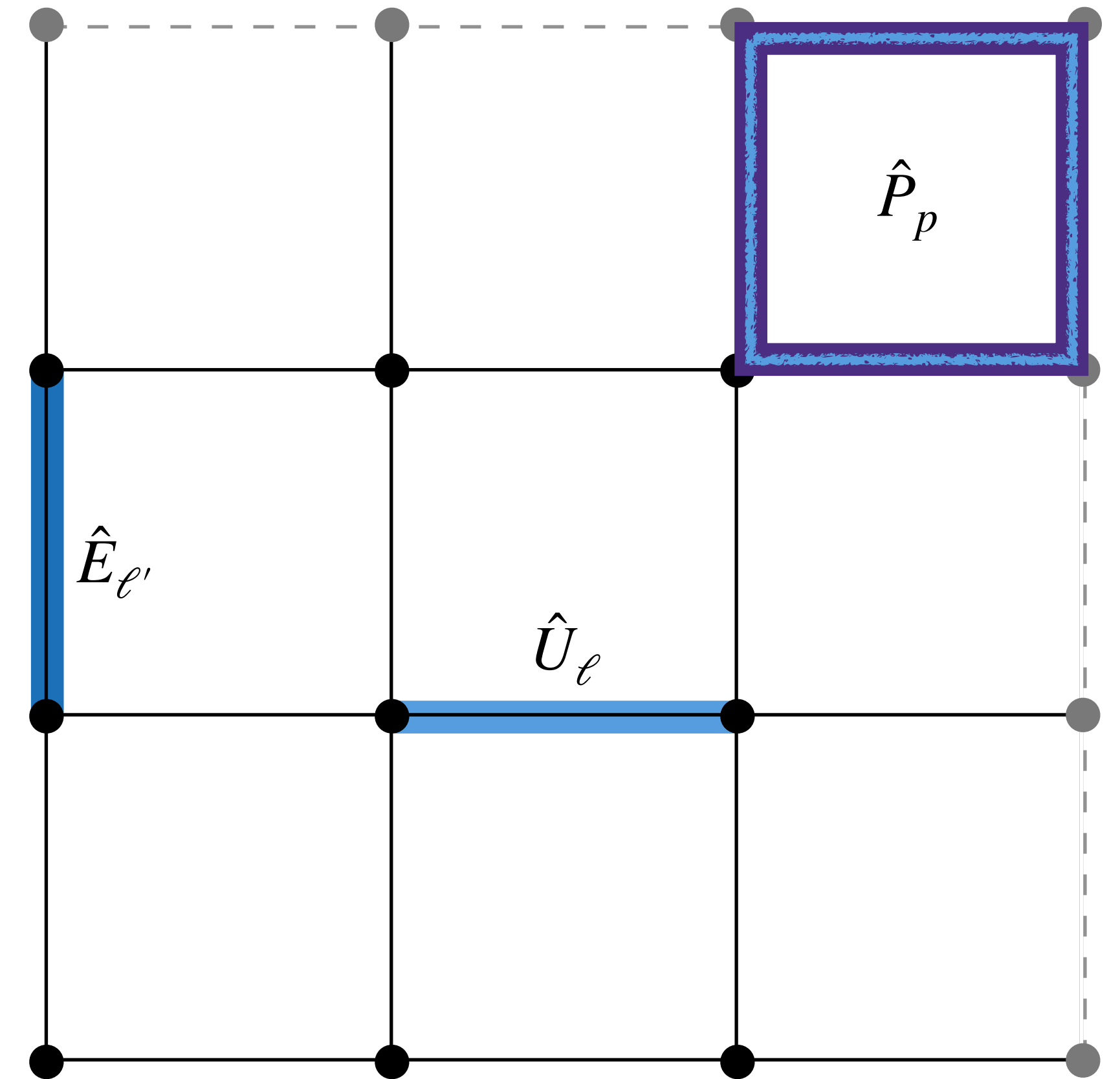
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$$H = \frac{1}{2a} \left[g^2 \sum_{\ell \in \text{links}} E_{\ell} E_{\ell} + \frac{1}{g^2} \sum_{p \in \text{plaquettes}} \text{Tr} \left(2I - P_p - P_p^{\dagger} \right) \right]$$



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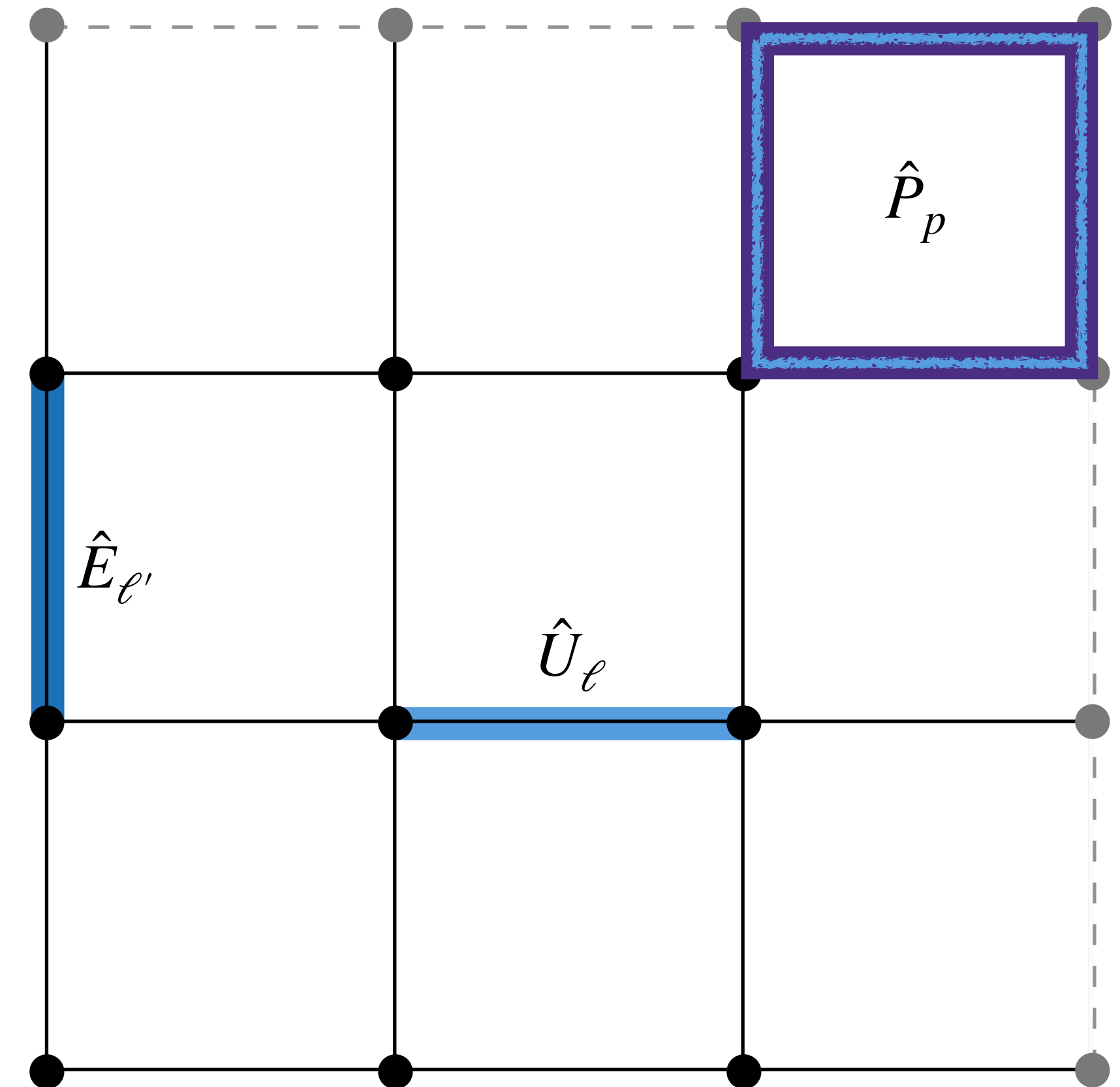
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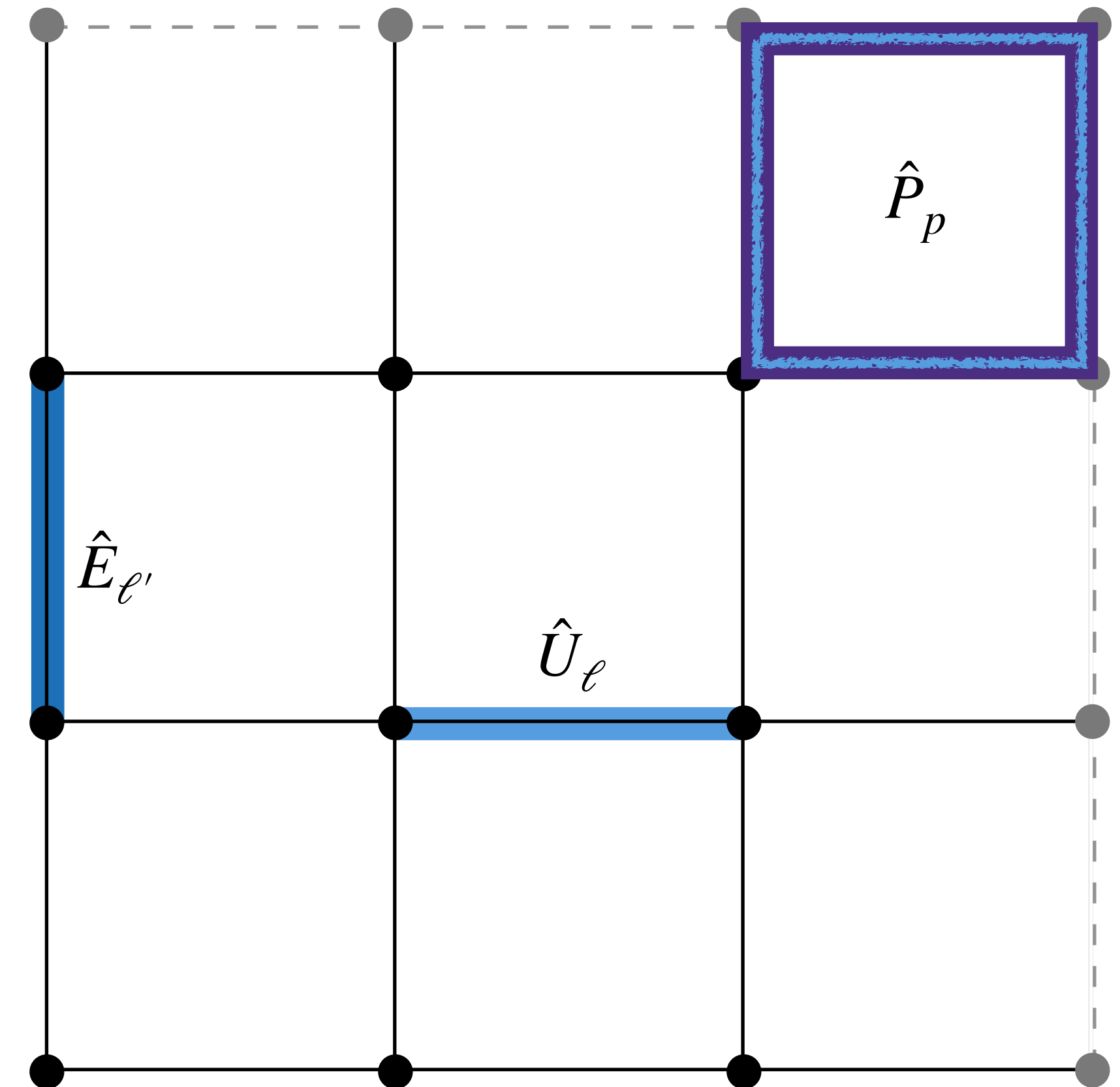
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These define the theory and therefore the circuit

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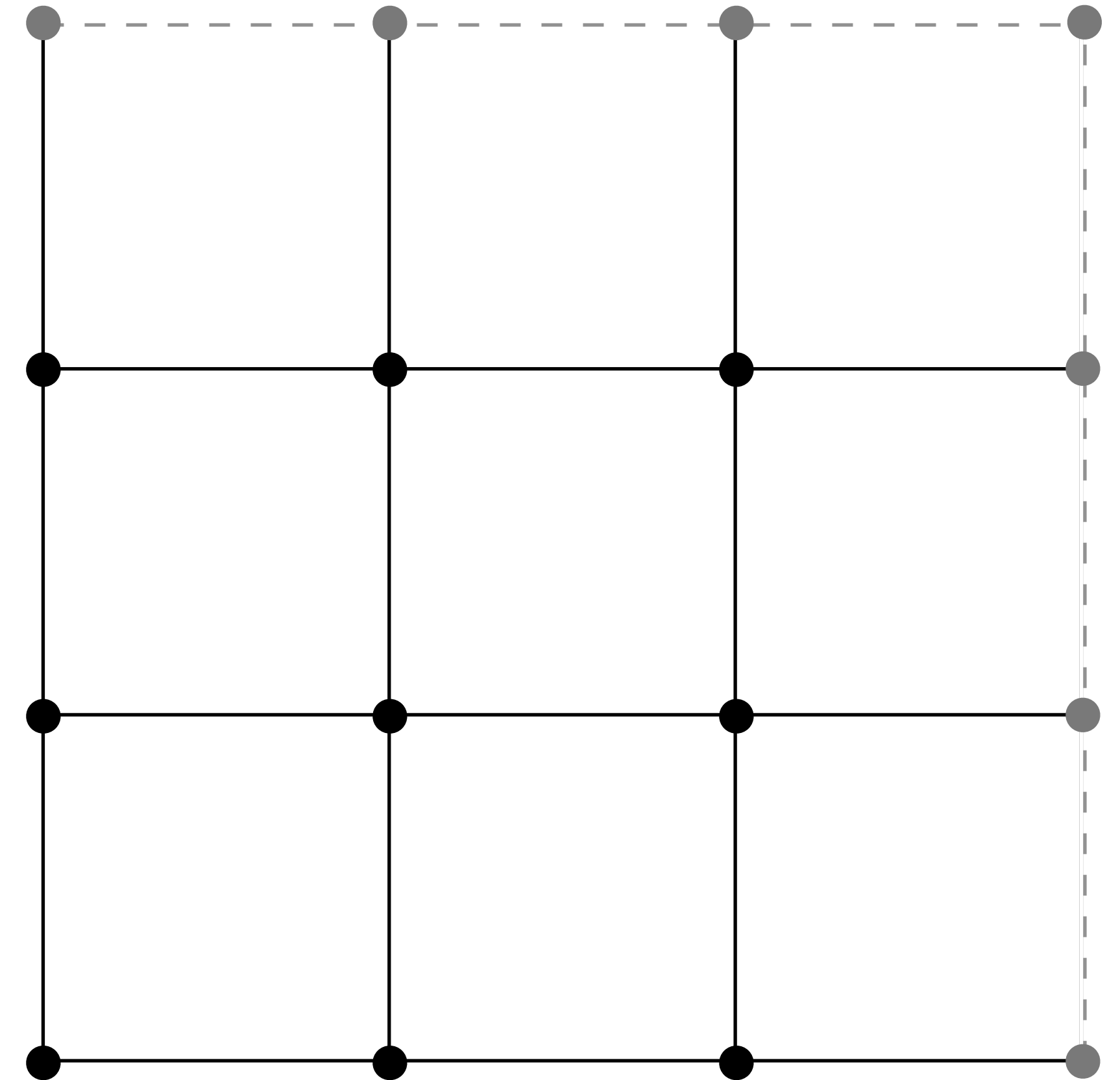
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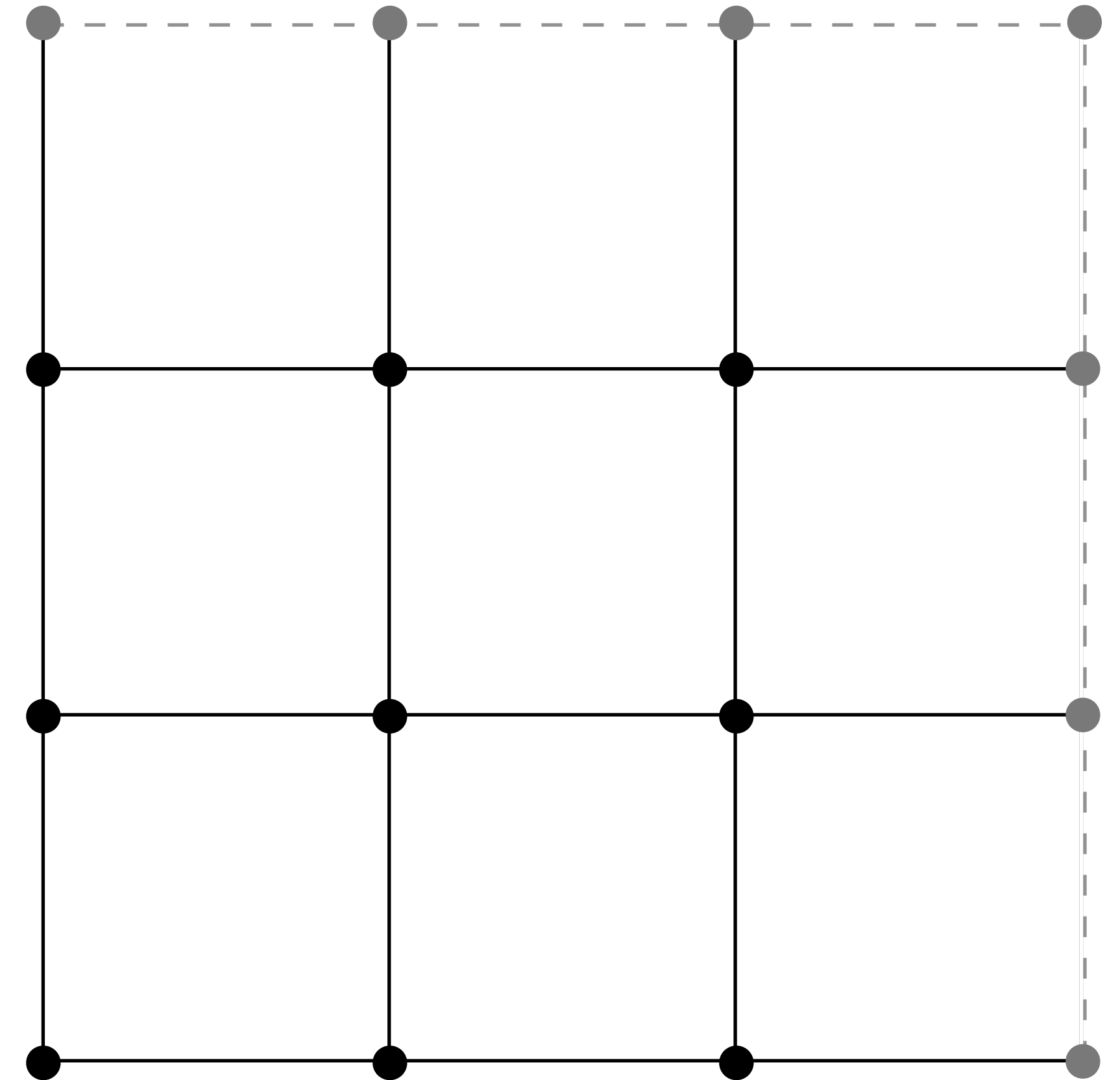
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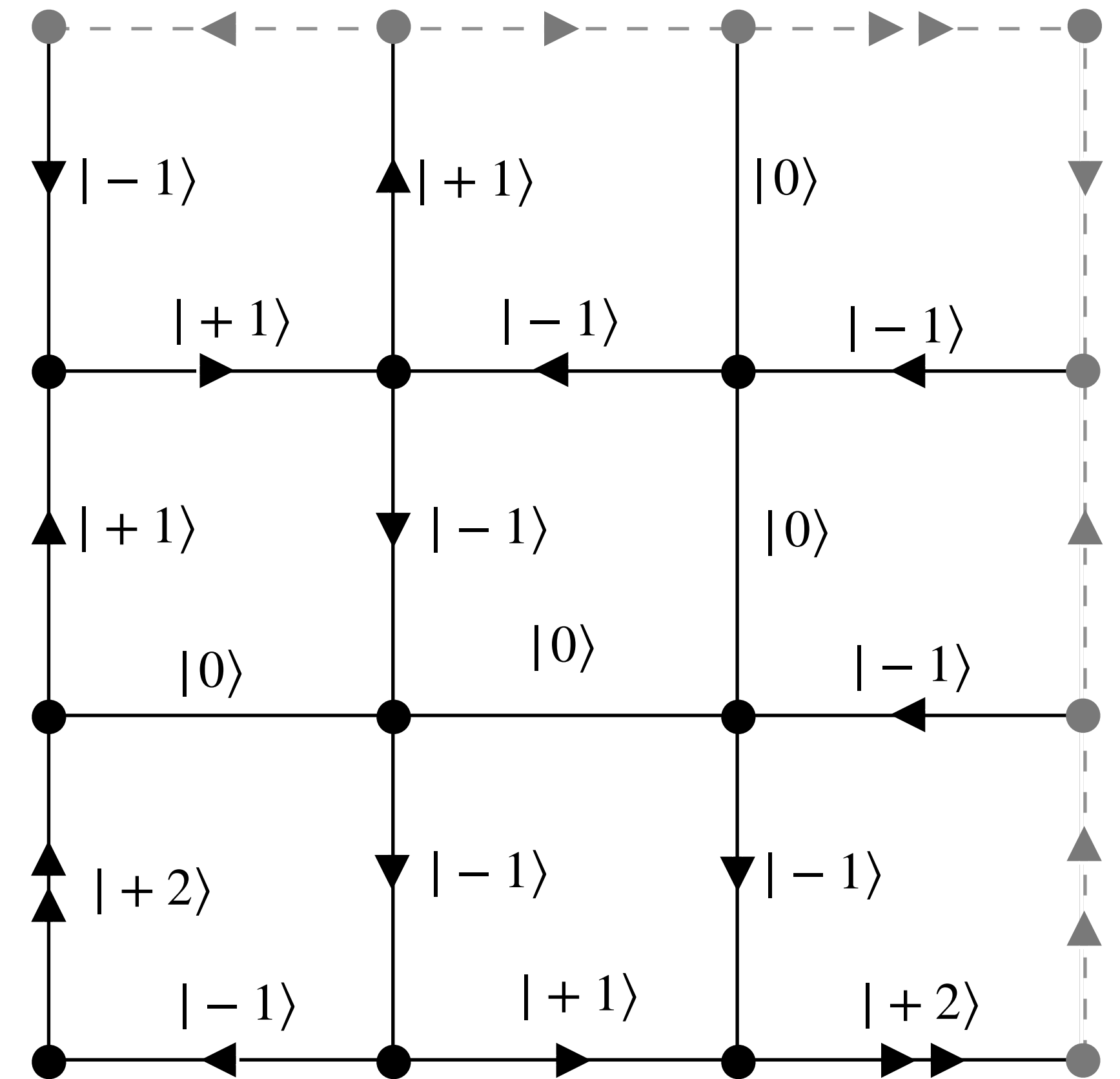
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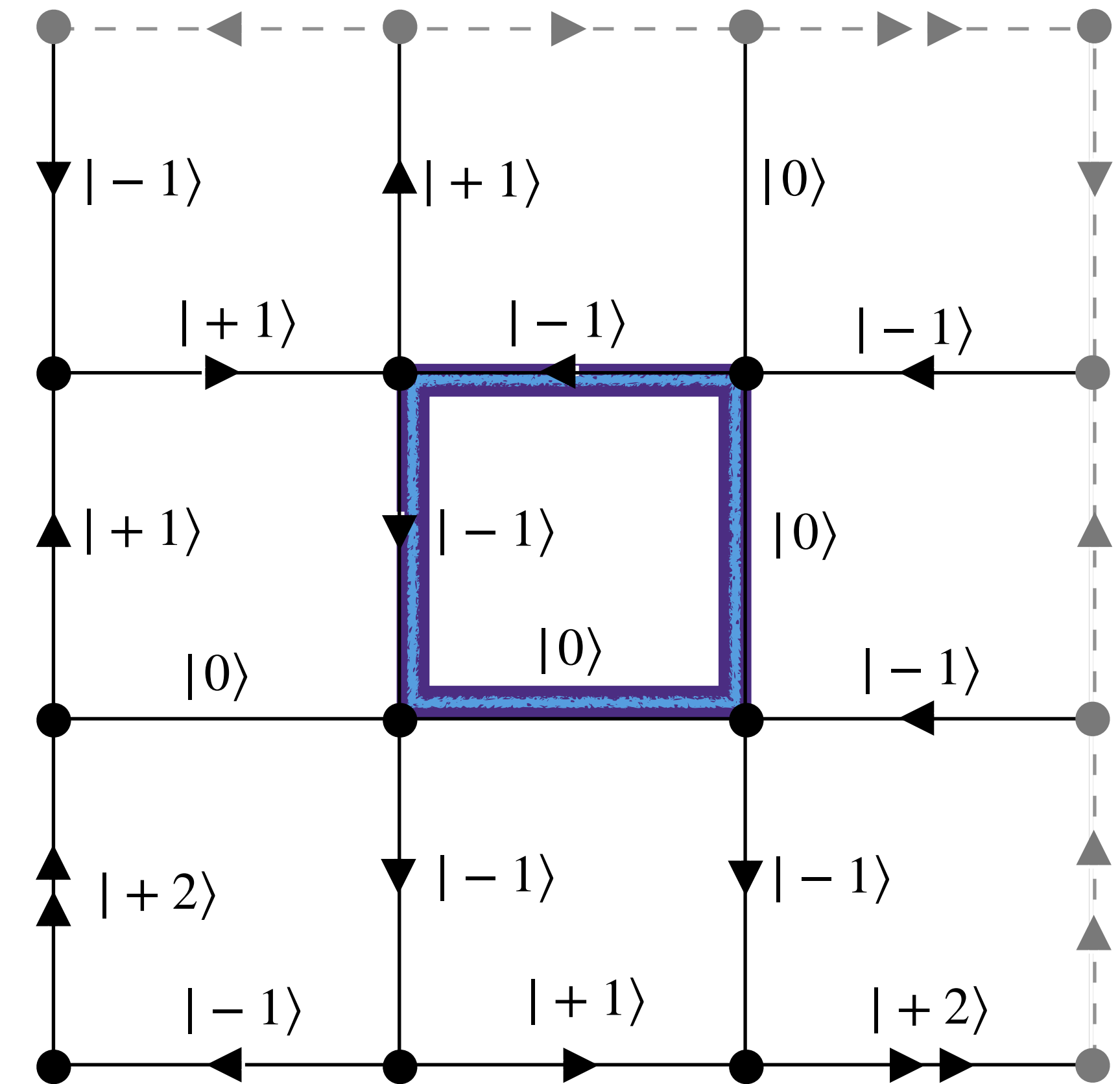
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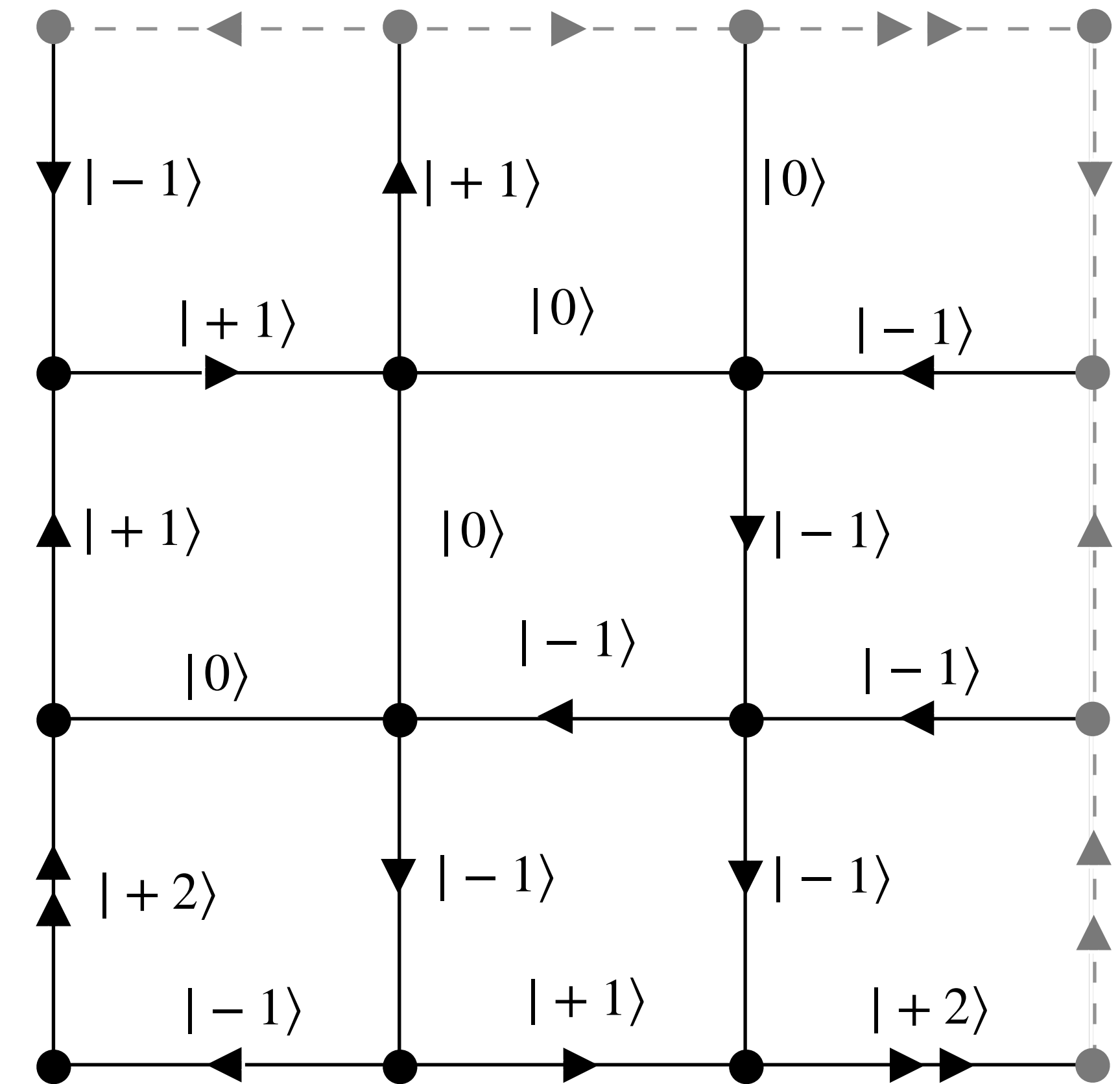
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General Idea: Similar to Abelian, but electric and gauge link operators carry color indices

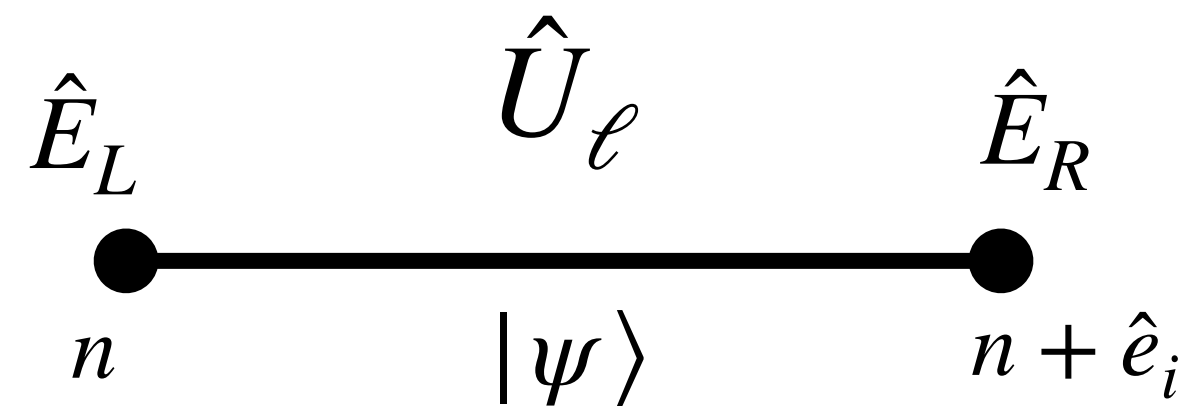
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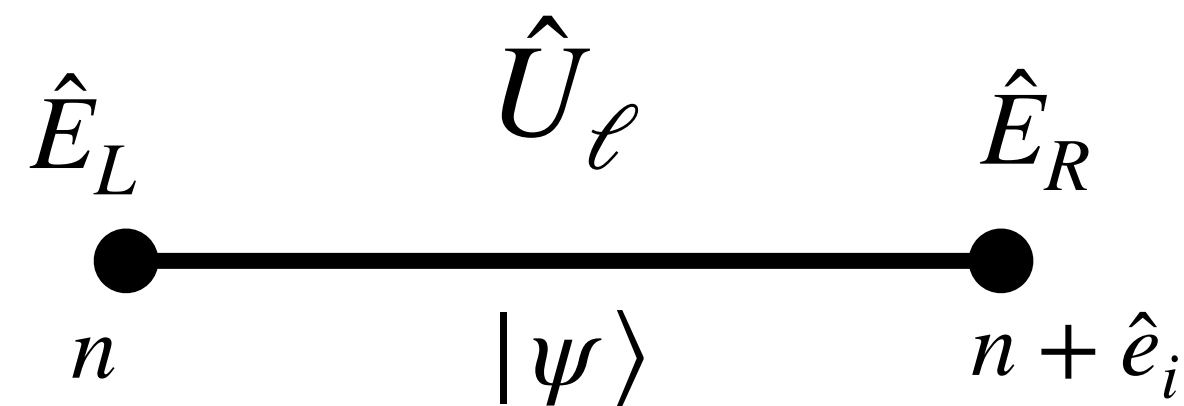
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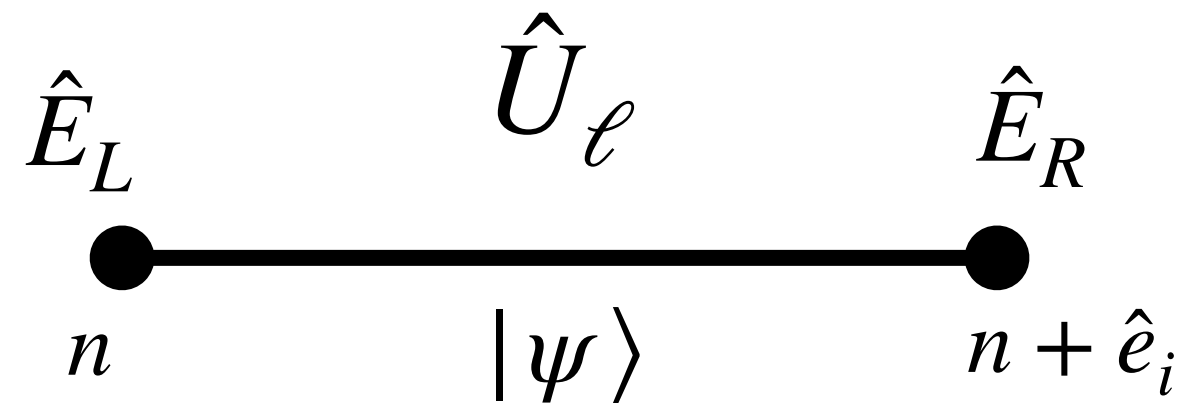
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So what is the obstacle to quantum simulation?

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- *Finite-dimensional Hamiltonian needs to faithfully capture desired physics*
- *Akin to UV regularization of Lagrangian methods*

B) Phenomenologically-relevant gauge groups are continuous

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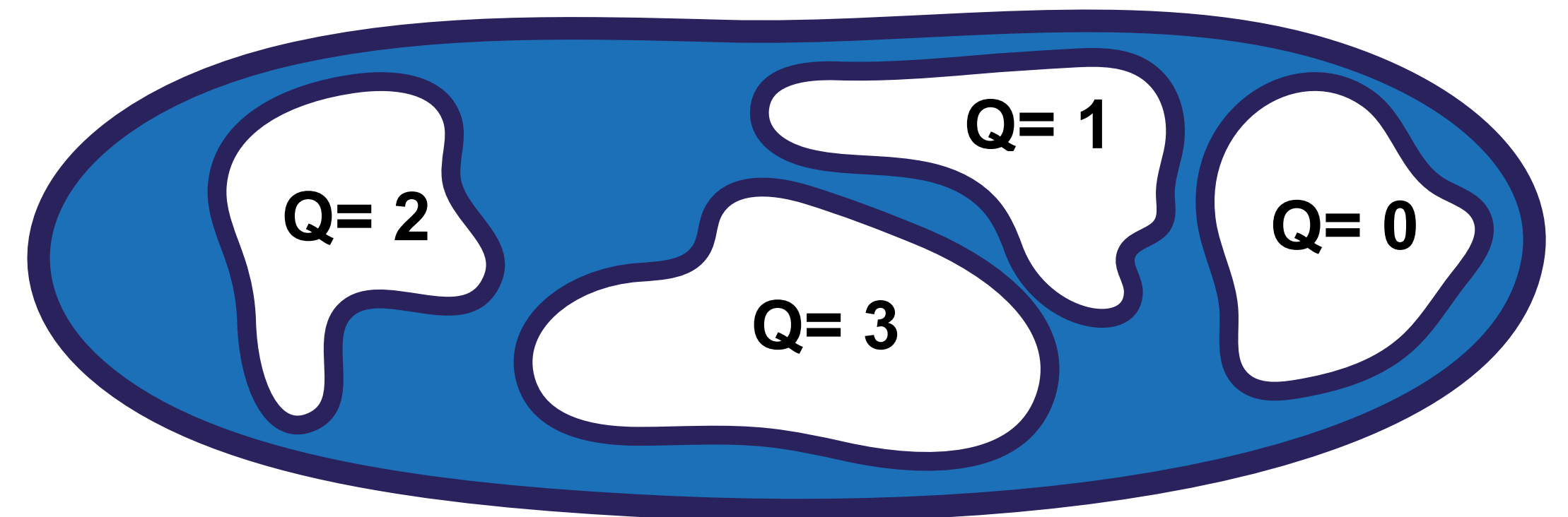
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C) Gauss Law is not automatically satisfied

- *Gauss's law is the constraint associated with the A_0 Lagrange multiplier*
- *Naive Hilbert space is tensor product of different charge sectors*



Desired Properties of Formulations

Motivation: “Ideal” formulation has these three properties

Gauge Invariant

Systematically Improvable

Efficient for Fine Lattices

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Unfortunately achieving this trifecta has proven quite challenging

Fully Gauge-Fixing $SU(2)$ in $2+1$ and $3+1$ Dimensions

*Bauer, D'Andrea, Freytsis and **DMG**, Phys.Rev.D 109 (2024) 7, 074501*

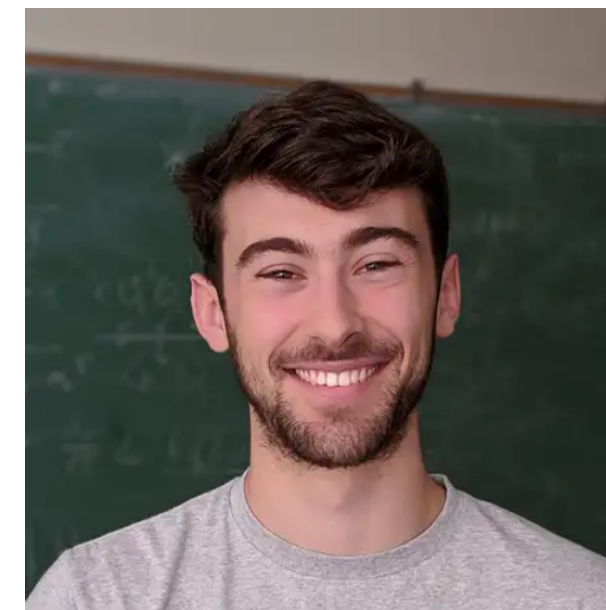
DMG, Kane and Bauer, Phys.Rev.D 111 (2025) 11, 114516



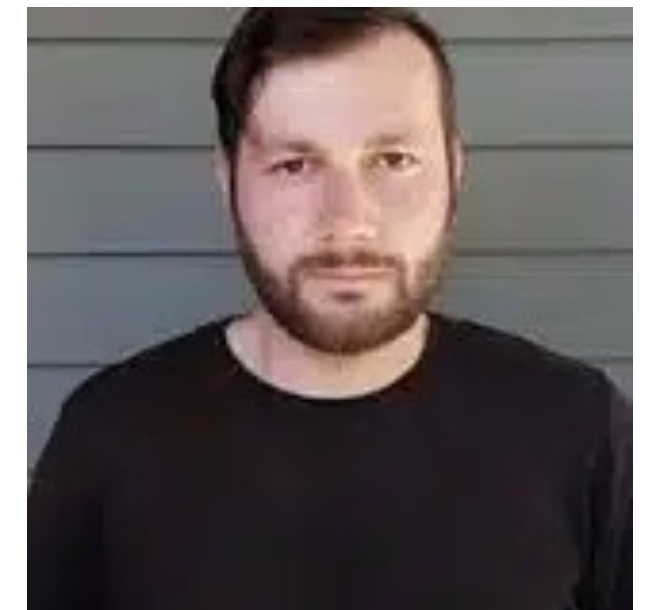
Christian Bauer



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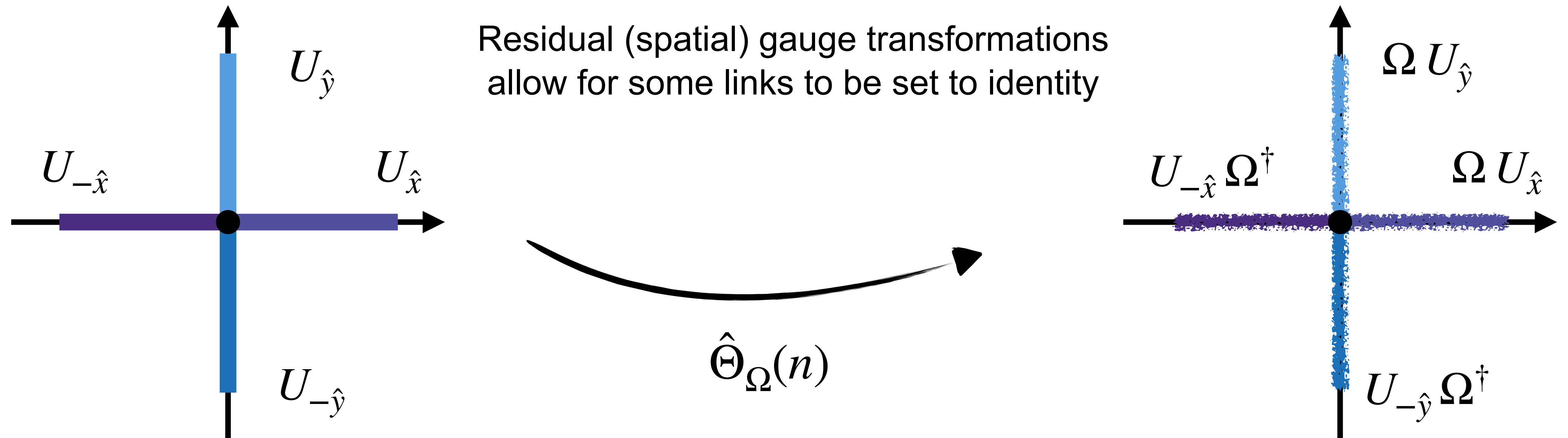
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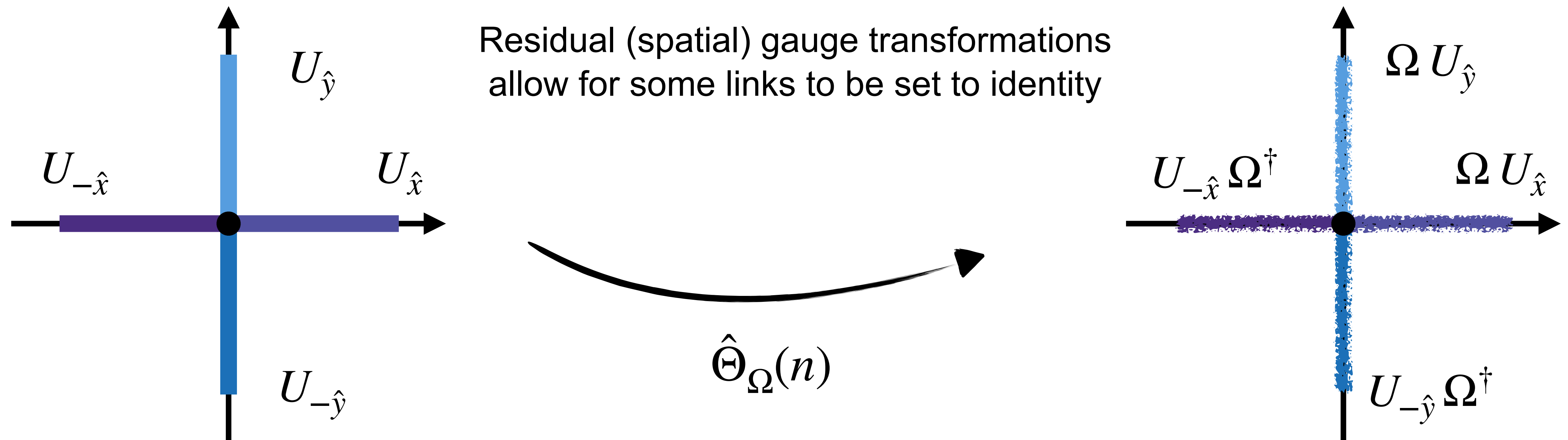
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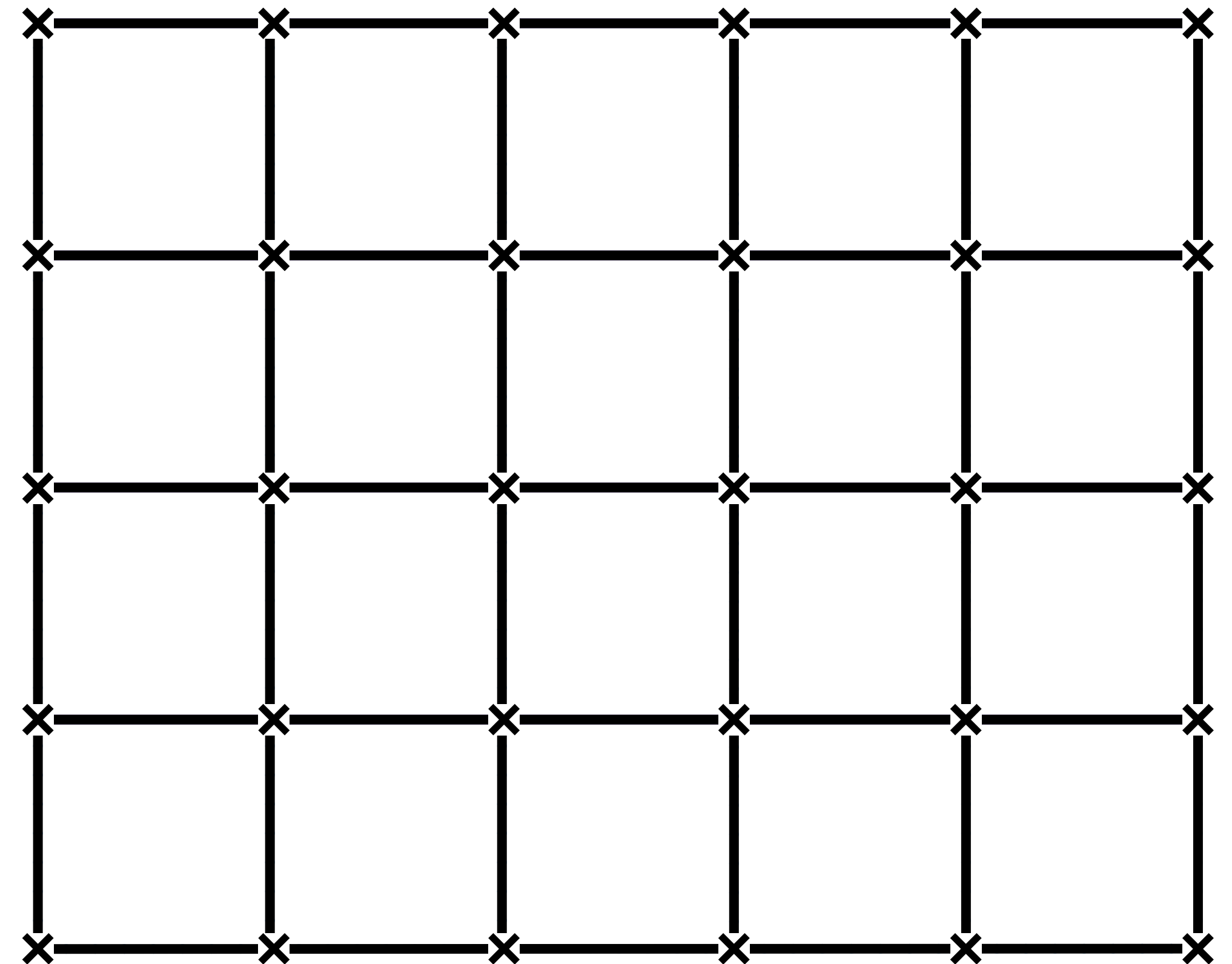
Not all gauge links can be set to the identity as gauge transformations affect neighboring links

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General Idea: Maximal-tree procedure provides a systematic method for determining which links can be eliminated

- Tree links: unphysical links that can be set to the identity
- Physical links: all other remaining links

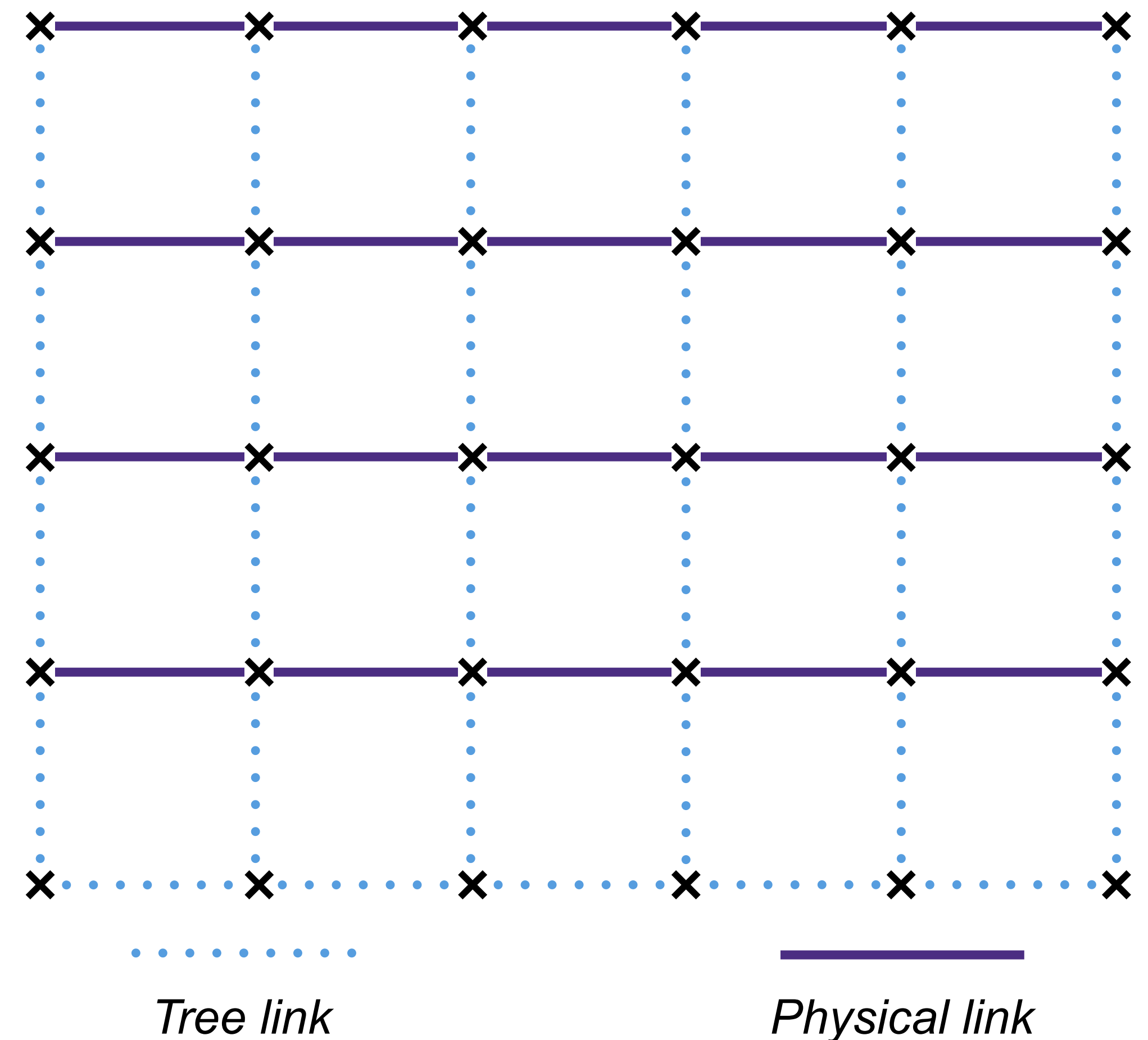


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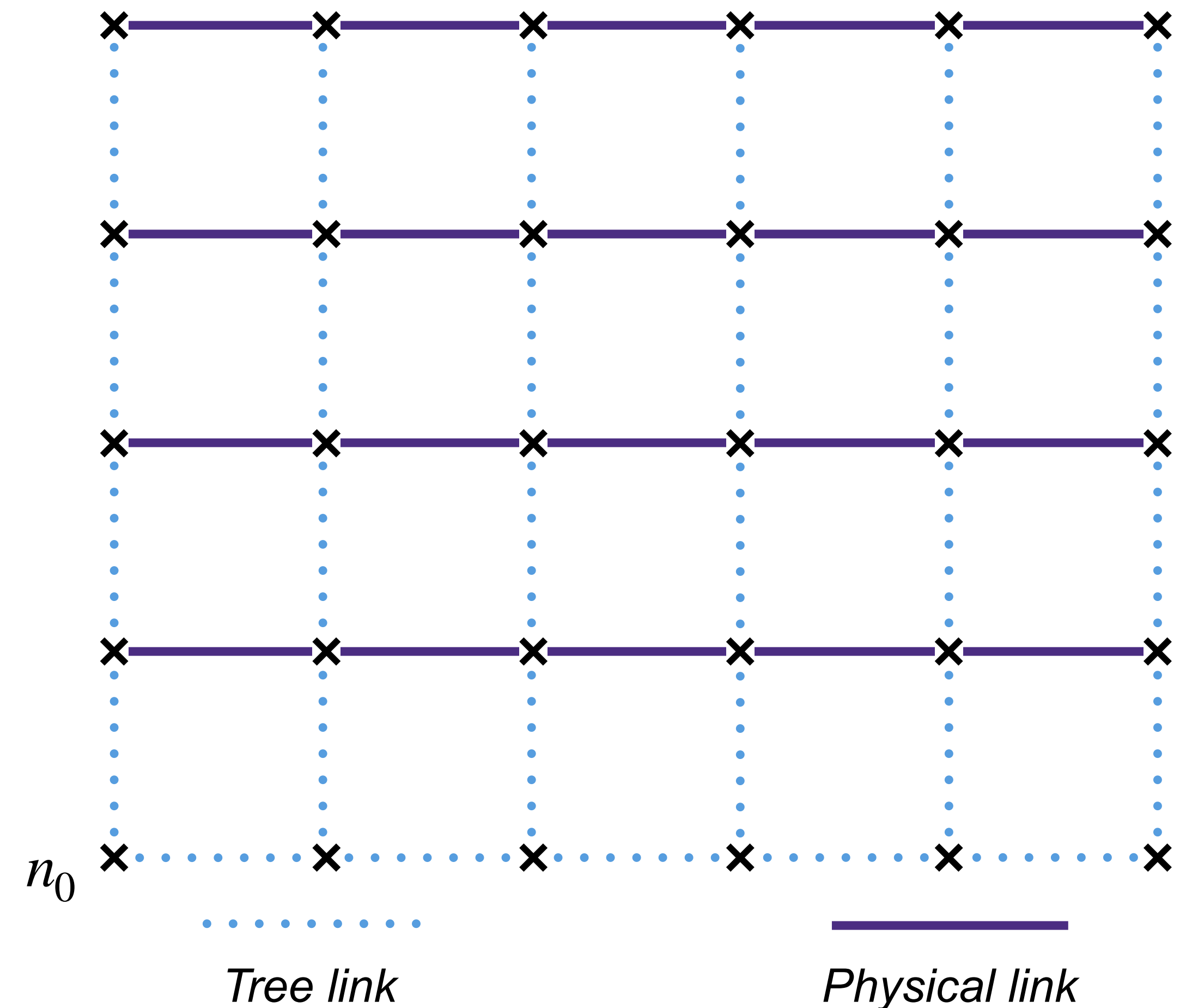
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Still Incomplete: Procedure eliminates all local gauge transformations, but not global

- All gauge transformations are carried out relative to the origin



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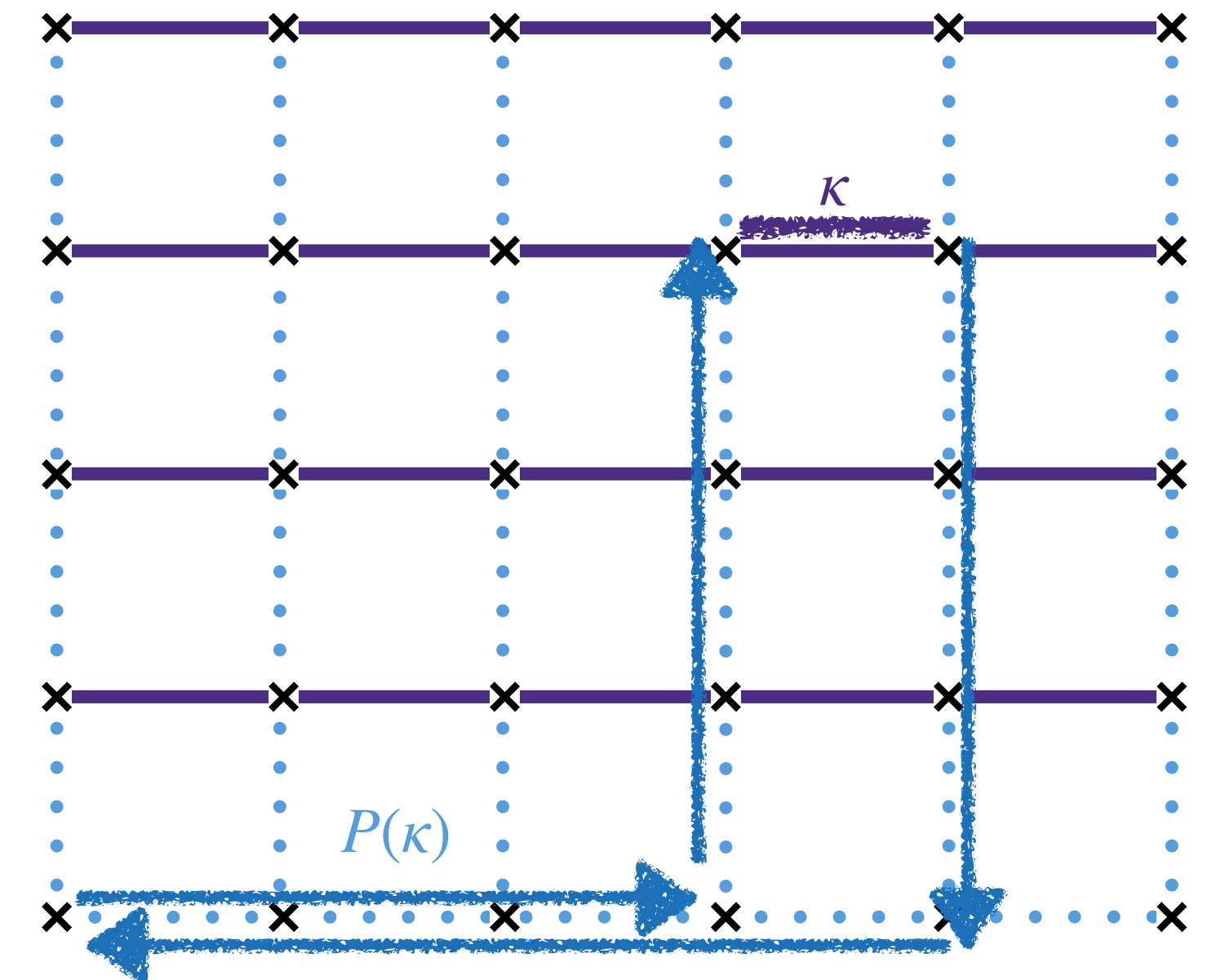
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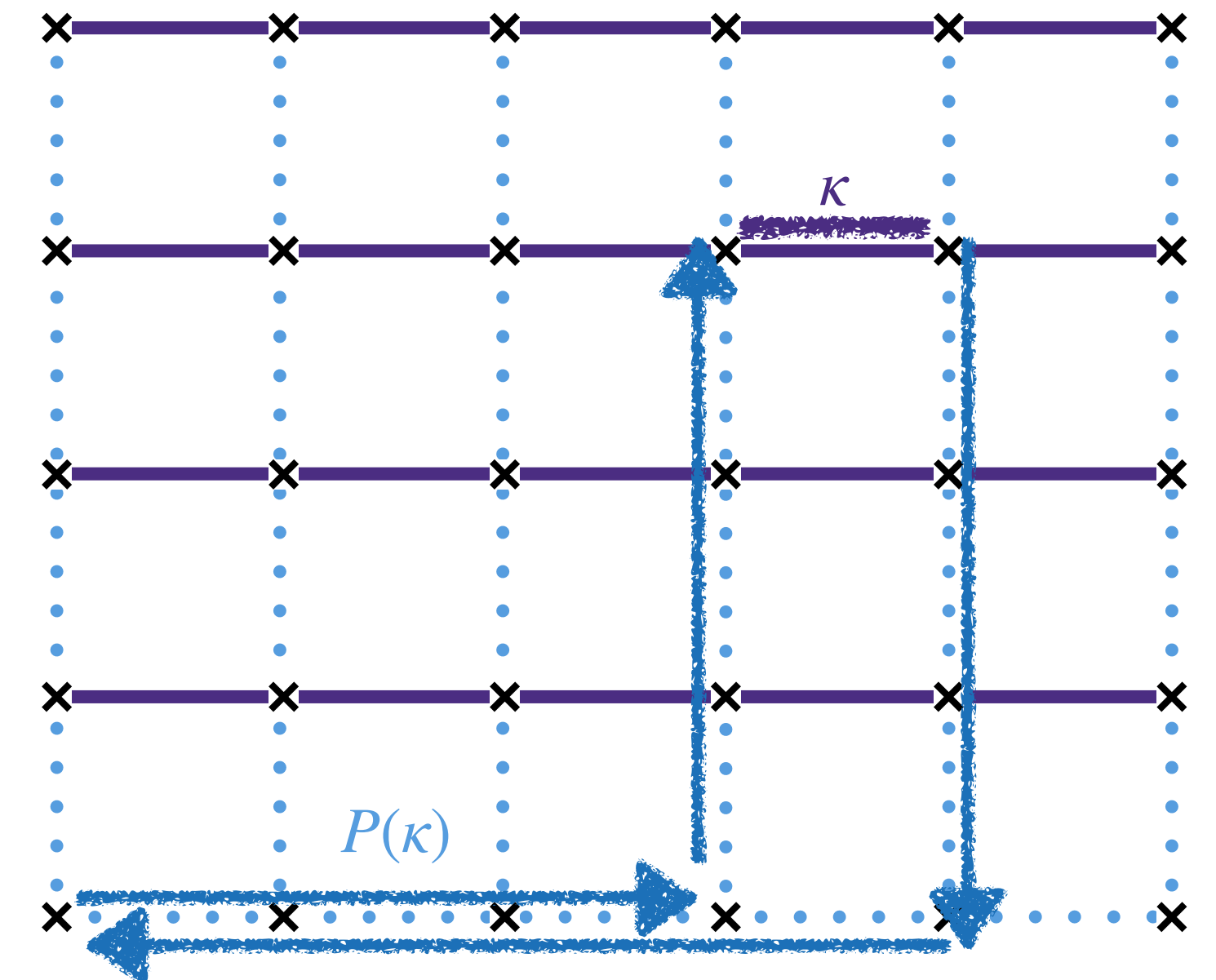


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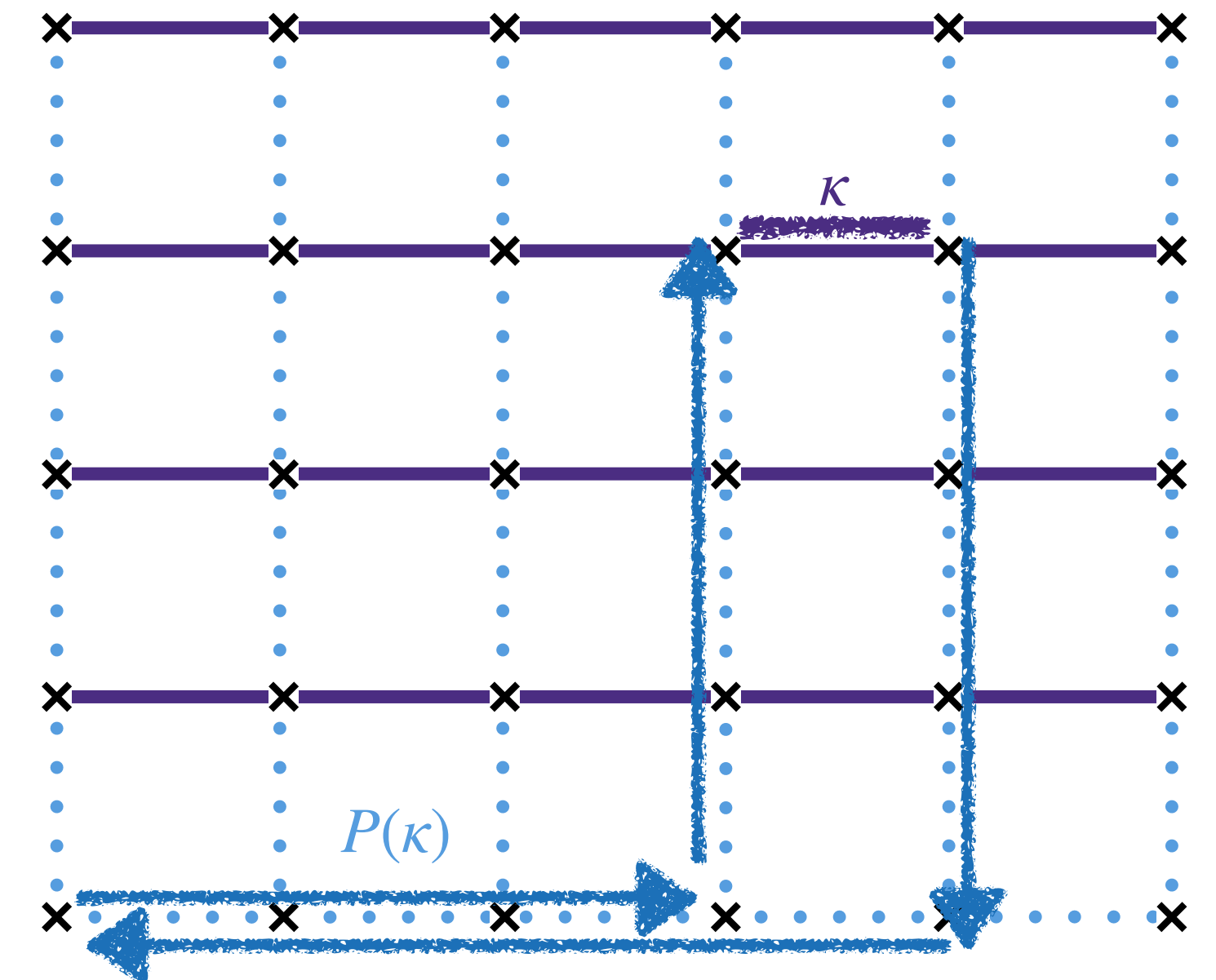


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Big Question

How ‘bad’ is the non-locality?

Step Two: Parameterizing Operators

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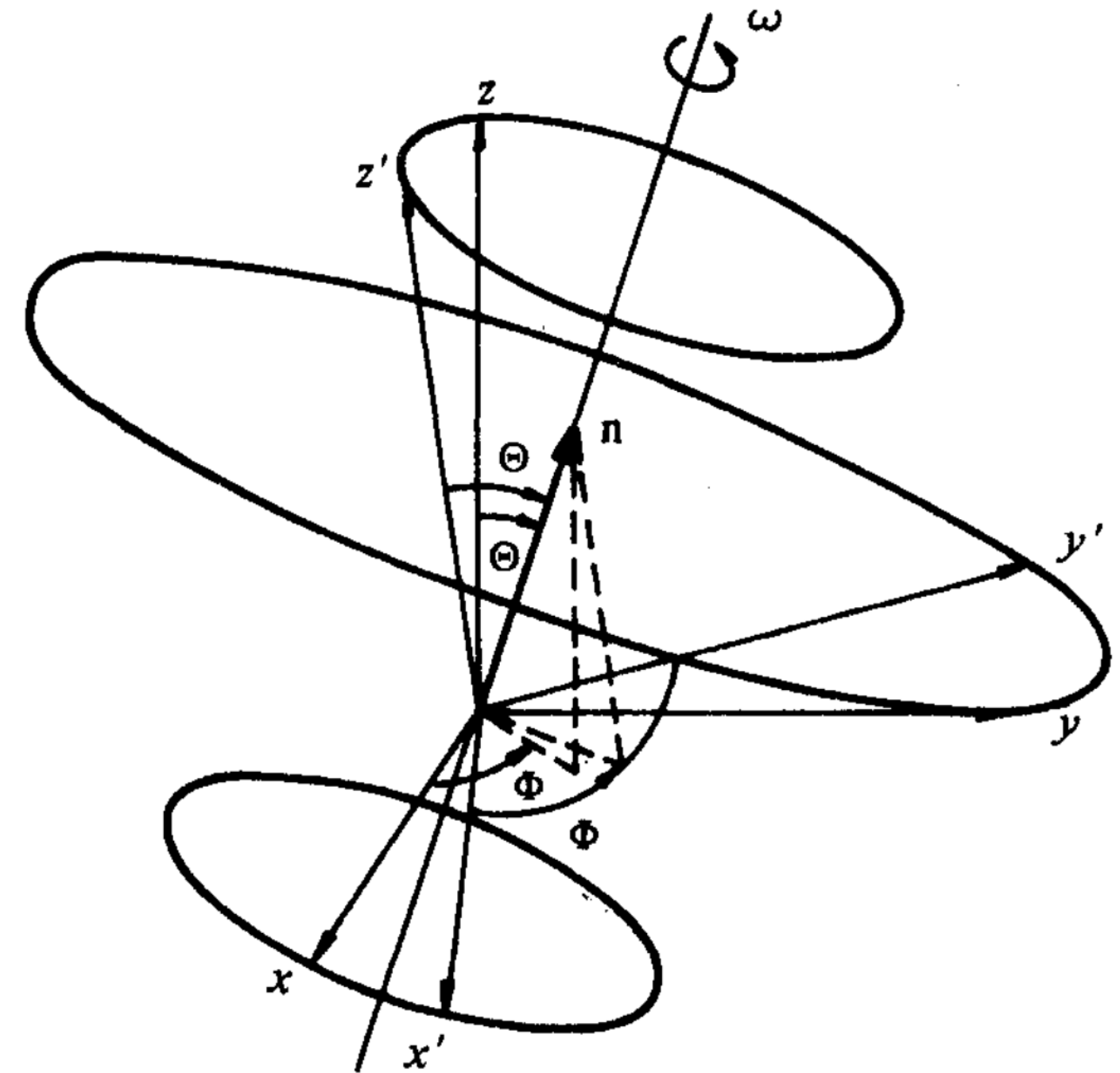
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Eye towards Digitization: Axis-angle coordinates are particularly convenient parameterization of SU(2)

- Each loop variable is simply an SU(2) matrix

$$X = \begin{pmatrix} \cos \frac{\omega}{2} - i \sin \frac{\omega}{2} \cos \theta & -i \sin \frac{\omega}{2} \sin \theta e^{-i\phi} \\ -i \sin \frac{\omega}{2} \sin \theta e^{i\phi} & \cos \frac{\omega}{2} + i \sin \frac{\omega}{2} \cos \theta \end{pmatrix}$$



“Quantum Theory of Angular Momentum”
Varshalovich, Moskalev, Khersonskii

Step Two: Parameterizing Operators

Motivation: Three quantum numbers of SU(2) Hamiltonian can be thought of as total angular momentum and projected angular momentums in lab frame and body frame: $\hat{L}^2, \hat{L}^z, \hat{L}'^z$

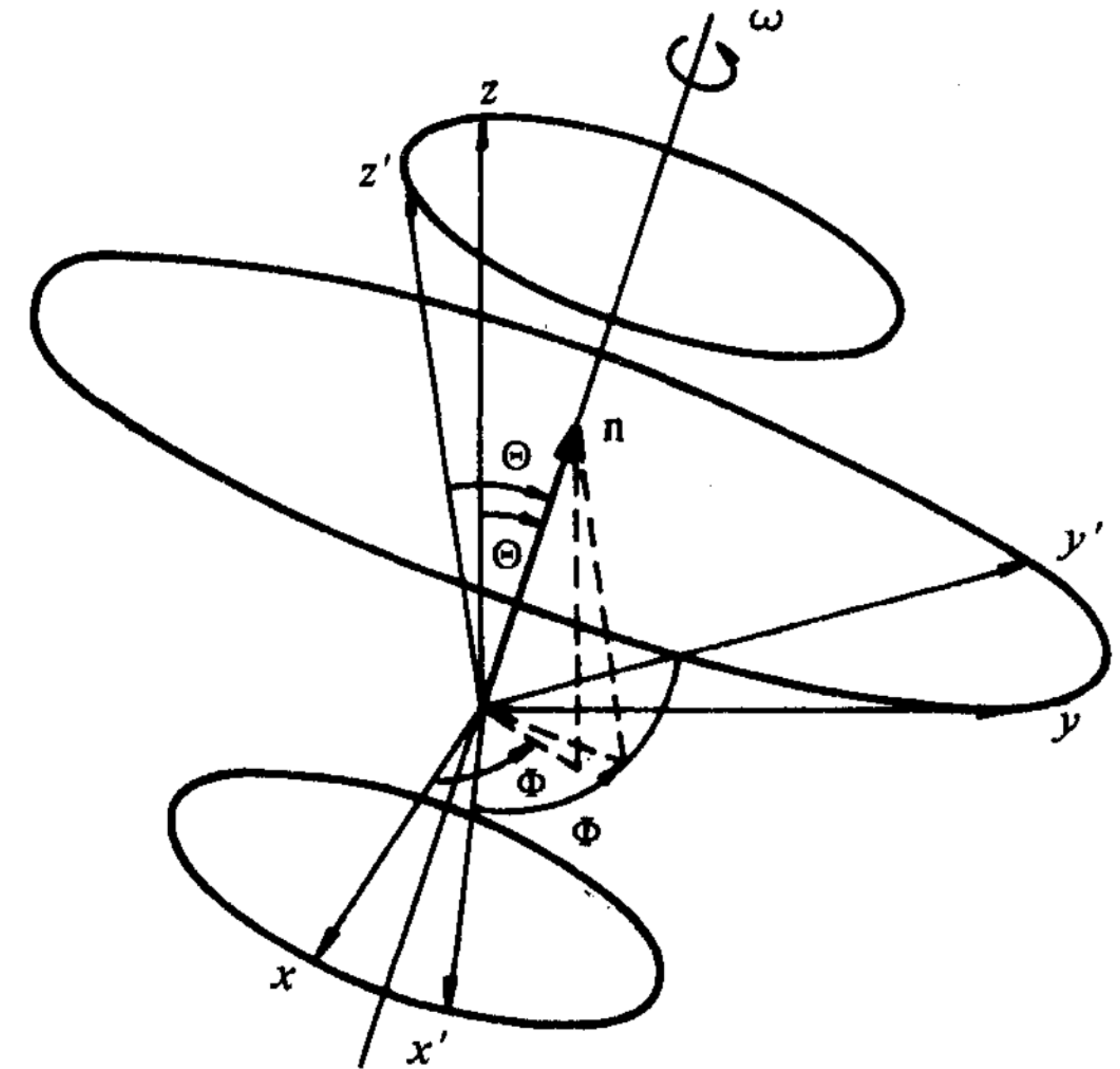
Eye towards Digitization: Axis-angle coordinates are particularly convenient parameterization of SU(2)

- Each loop variable is simply an SU(2) matrix

$$X = \begin{pmatrix} \cos \frac{\omega}{2} - i \sin \frac{\omega}{2} \cos \theta & -i \sin \frac{\omega}{2} \sin \theta e^{-i\phi} \\ -i \sin \frac{\omega}{2} \sin \theta e^{i\phi} & \cos \frac{\omega}{2} + i \sin \frac{\omega}{2} \cos \theta \end{pmatrix}$$

- Electric operators are differential operators

$$\mathcal{E}_{L/R} = \frac{\Sigma \mp L}{2} \quad \Sigma = 2i\mathbf{n}\partial_\omega + \cot\left(\frac{\omega}{2}\right) (\mathbf{n} \times \mathbf{L})$$



“Quantum Theory of Angular Momentum”
Varshalovich, Moskalev, Khersonskii

Step Three: Digitize Operators

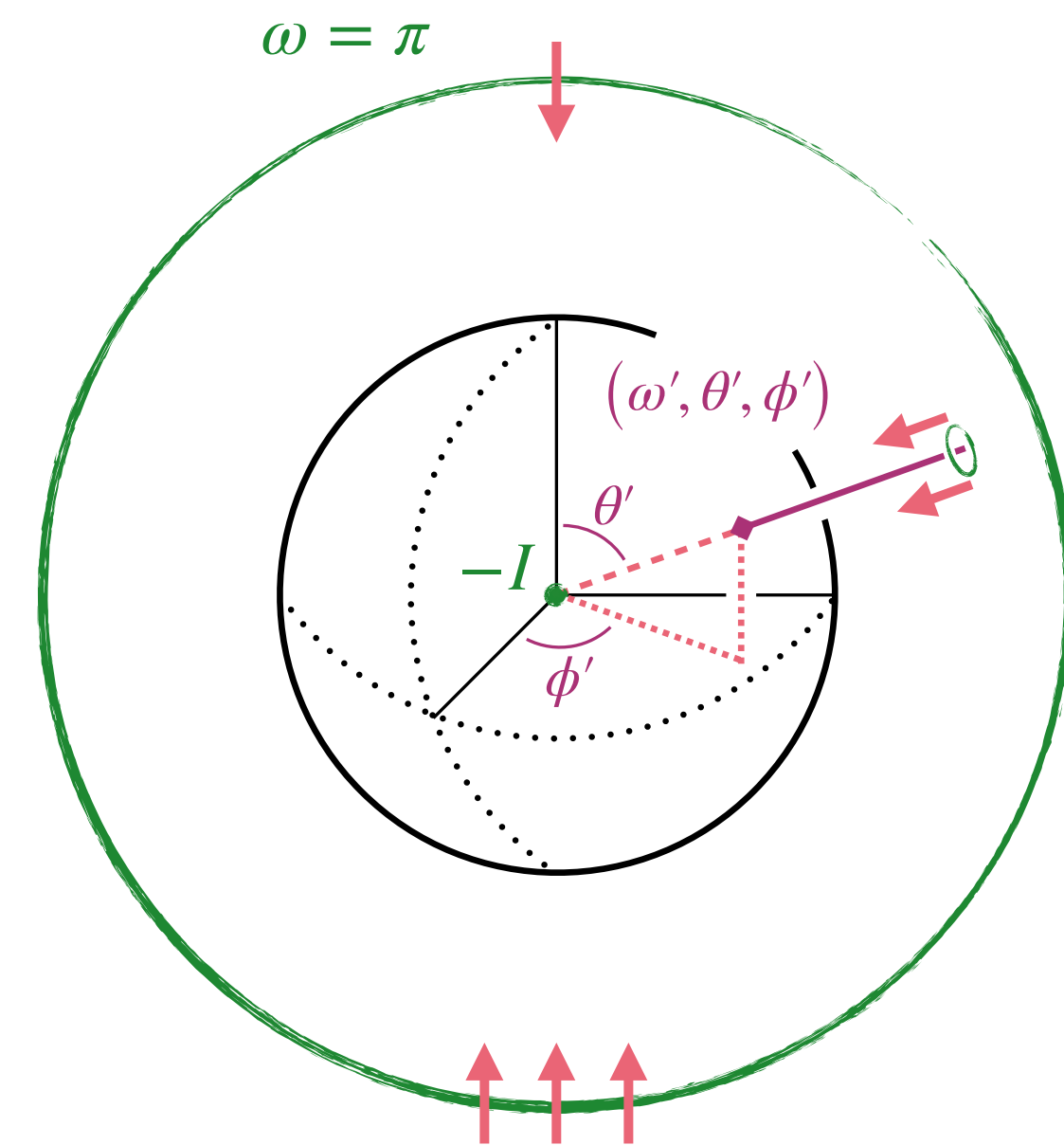
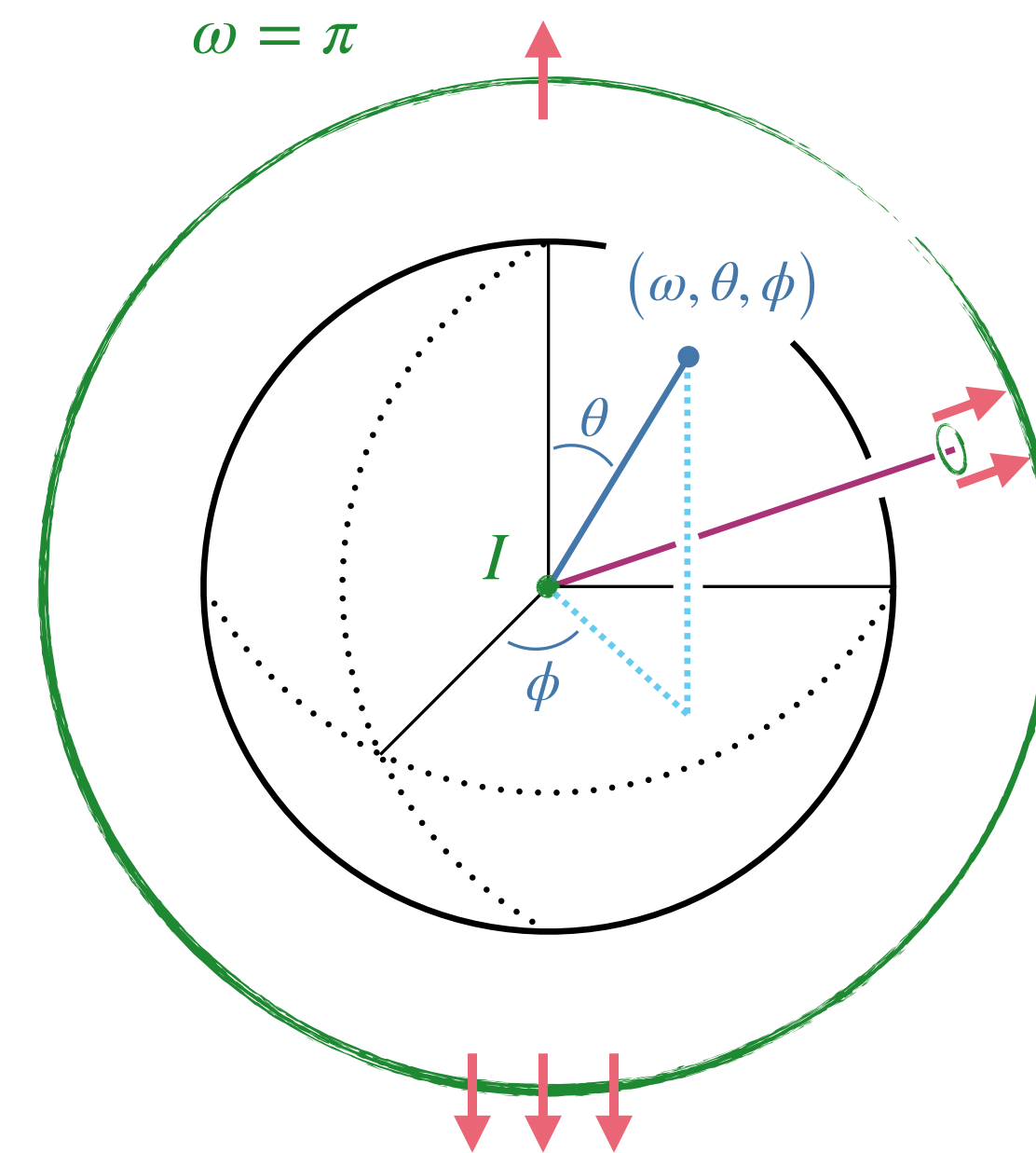
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Shift of Intuition: Axis-angle coordinates are also hyperspherical coordinates of S^3

- Angular coordinates (θ_k, ϕ_k) can be recast as spherical harmonic quantum numbers (ℓ_k, m_k)
- Quantum numbers (ℓ_k, m_k) are discrete, with a natural truncation

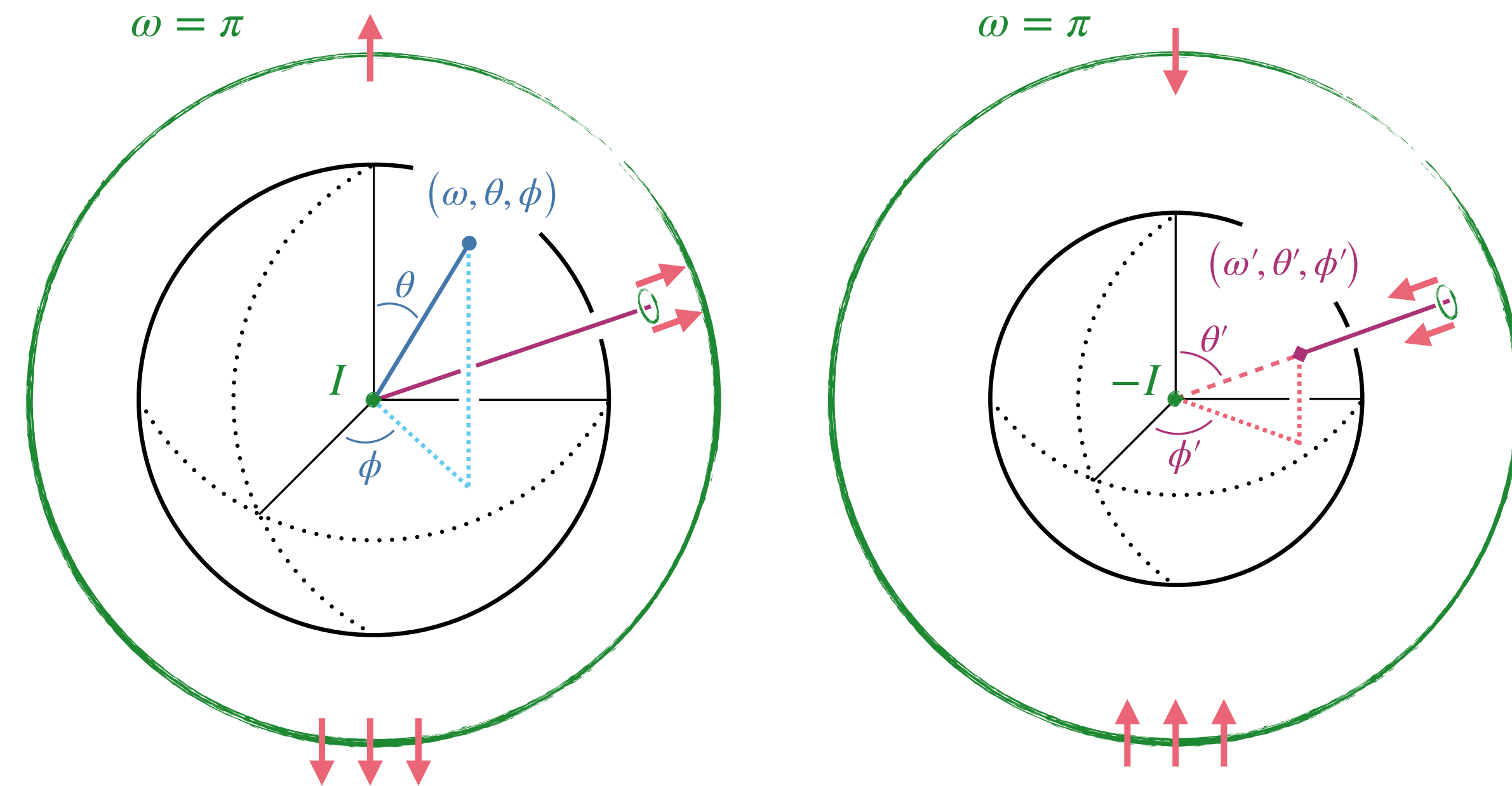


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- Variable ω_k is radial coordinate and can be digitized using previously developed methods*



“Mixed Basis”: ω is magnetic basis variable and (ℓ, m) are electric basis

* Bauer, C.W. and DMG, Phys. Rev.D 107 (2023) 3, L031503

Finish Step One: Gauge Fix Fully

Observation: SU(2) Hamiltonian can be thought of as a system of rigid rods fixed together at the origin (axis-angle are hyperspherical coordinates)

Motivation: The quantum numbers (ℓ_κ, m_κ) are related to the total color charge of the system

$$\hat{G}^a(n_0) = \sum_{\kappa} \left[\hat{E}_L^a(\kappa) - \hat{E}_R^a(\kappa) \right] = - \sum_{\kappa} L_\kappa^a$$

(“difference between lab and body frame”)

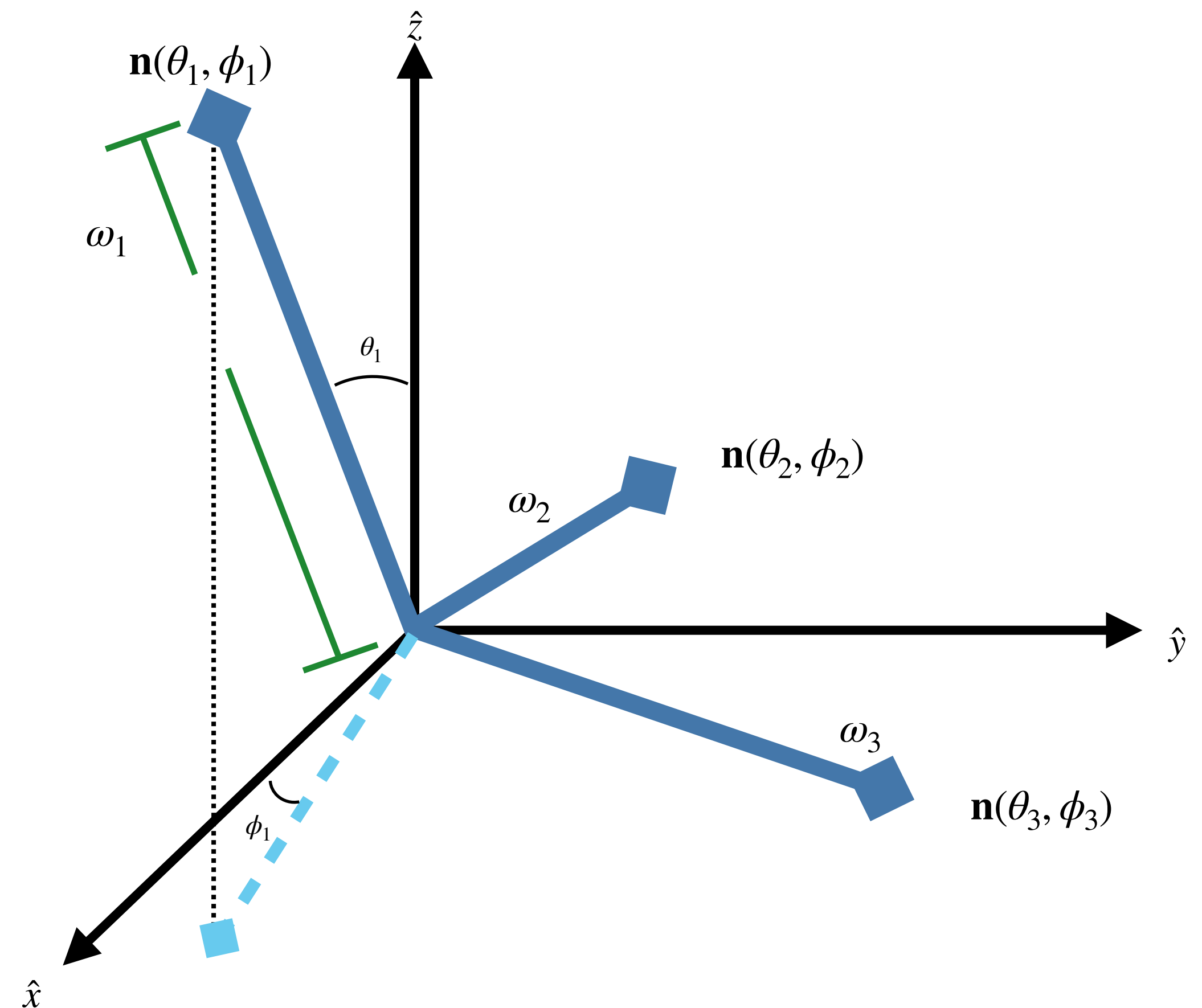
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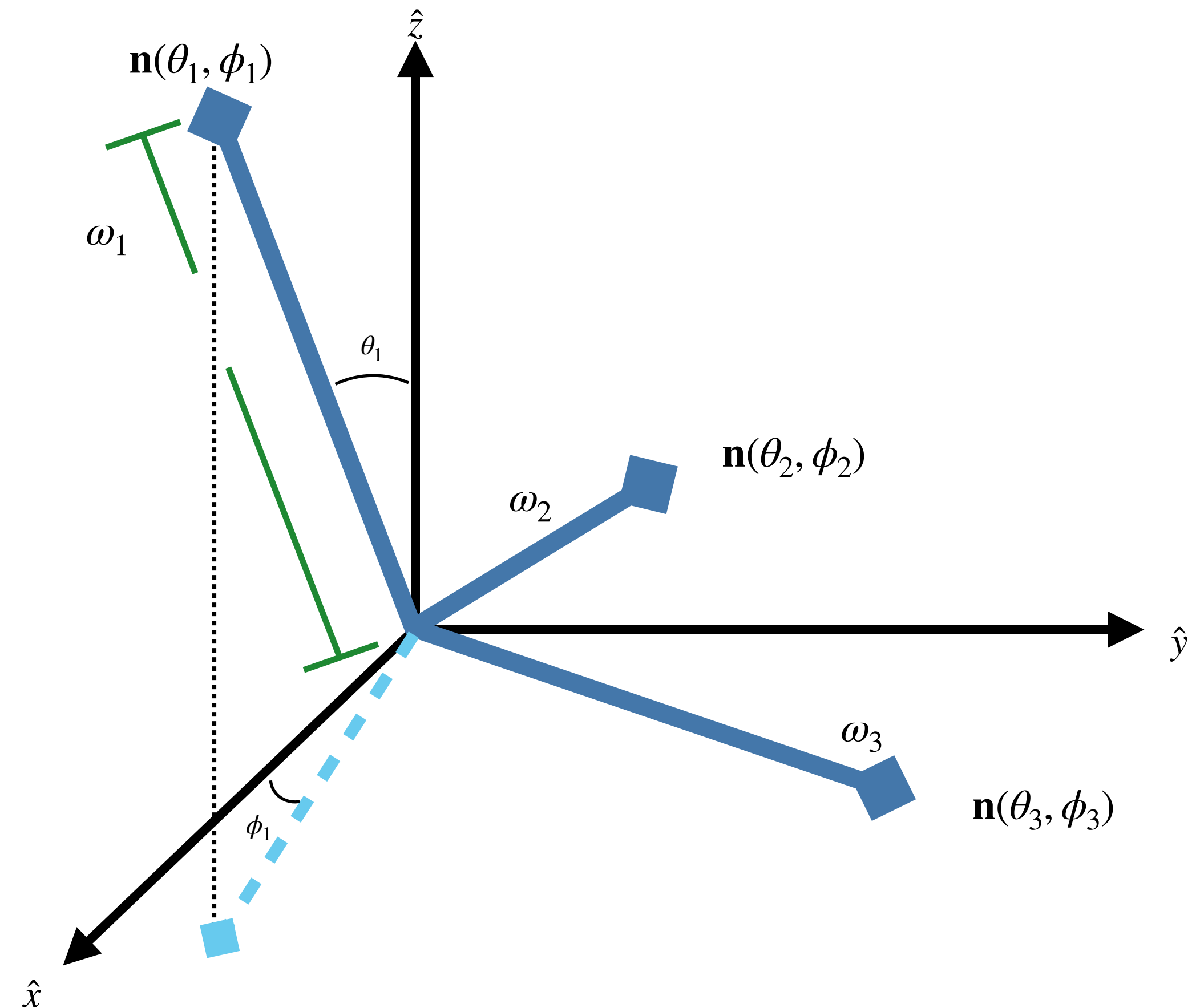
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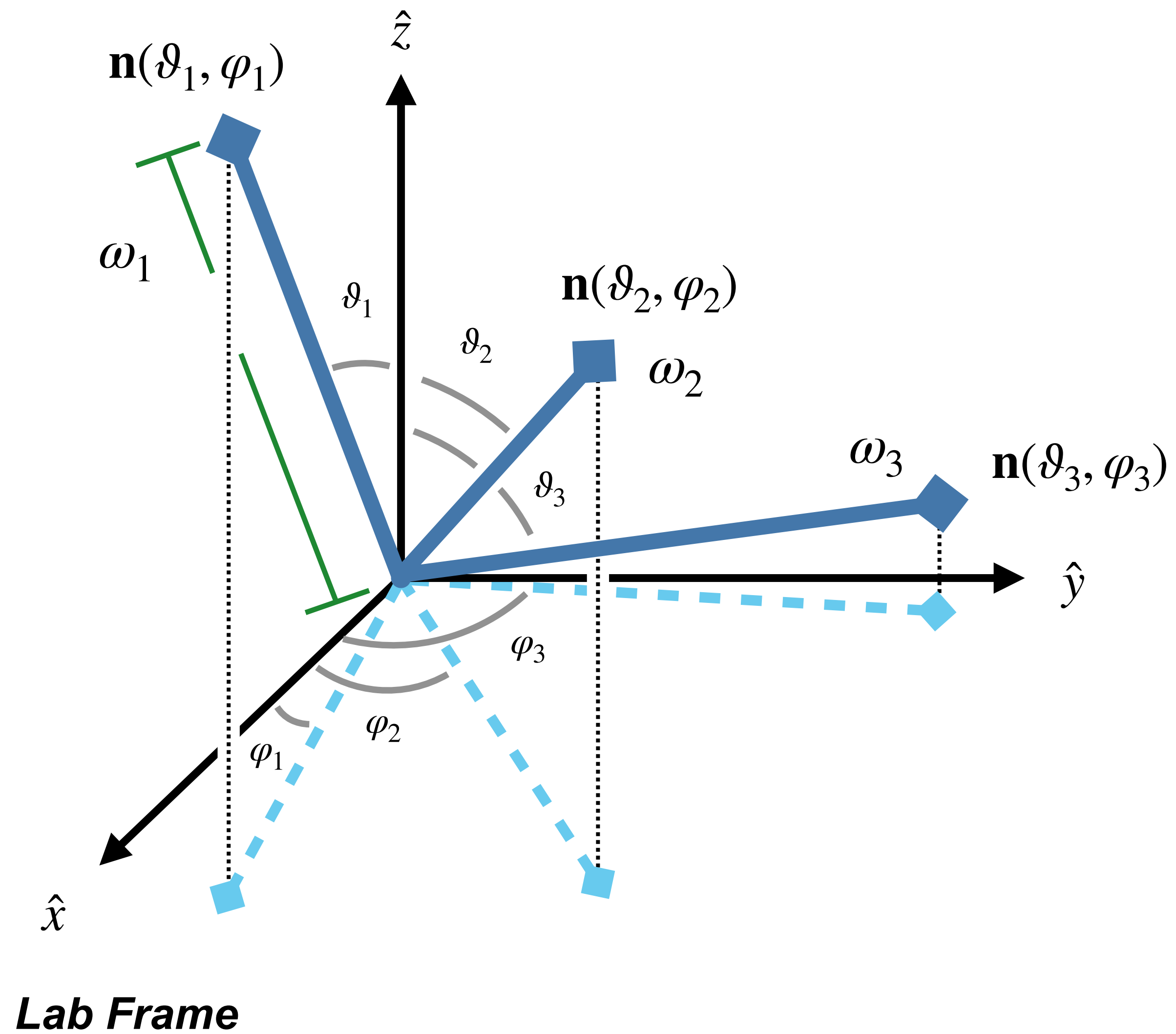
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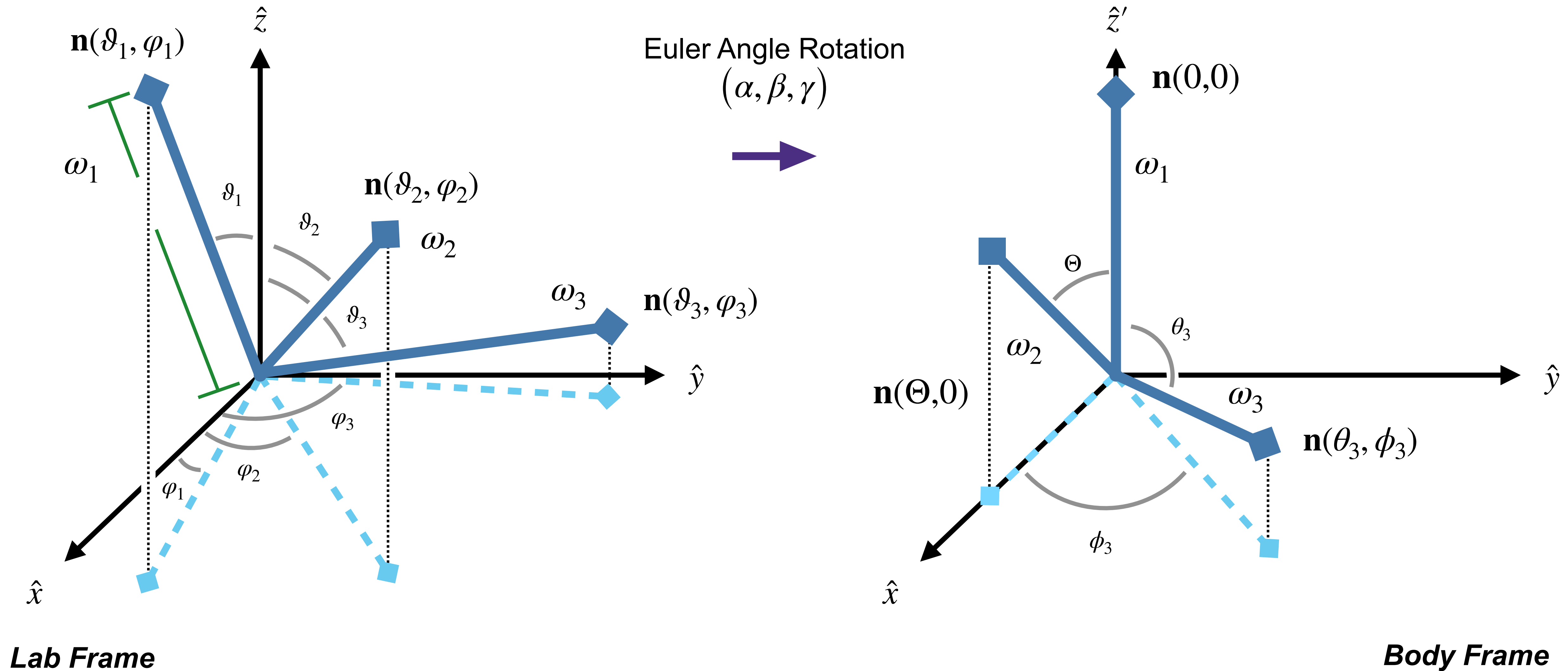
Thought: Is the remaining gauge redundancy related to the rotation between the lab and body frame?



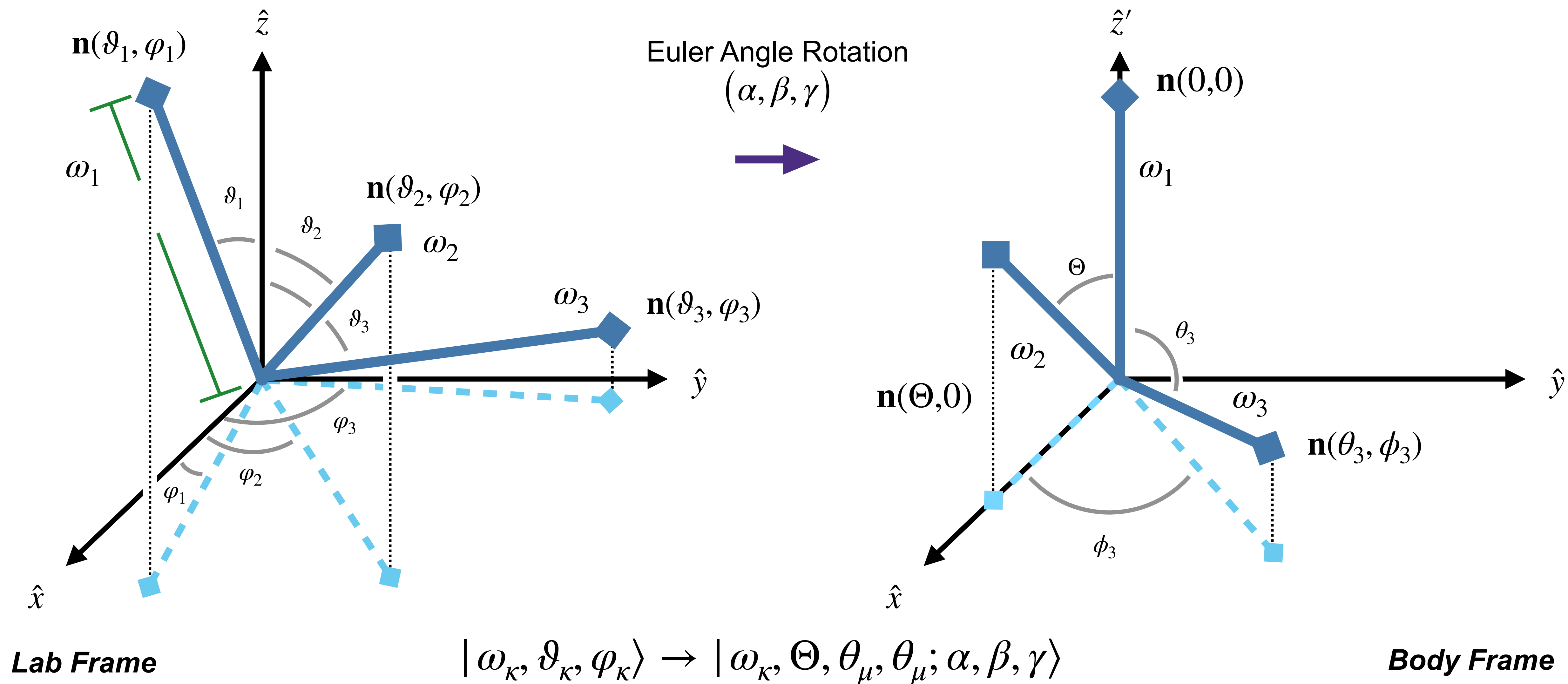
Finish Step One: Gauge Fix Fully



Finish Step One: Gauge Fix Fully



Finish Step One: Gauge Fix Fully



Finish Step One: Gauge Fix Fully

$SU(2)$
2+1 and 3+1

General Idea: Appropriate basis change will lead us to a fully gauge-fixed theory for arbitrary volumes

(Magnetic) Basis Change: $|\omega_K, \vartheta_K, \varphi_K\rangle \rightarrow |\omega_K, \Theta, \theta_\mu, \theta_\mu; \alpha, \beta, \gamma\rangle$

(Mixed) Basis Change: $|\omega_K, \ell_K, m_K\rangle \rightarrow |\omega_K, n_{12}, \ell_\mu, m_\mu; \Lambda, M, N\rangle$

Finish Step One: Gauge Fix Fully

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Key Points: After calculating all matrix possible matrix elements in Hamiltonian, we make three important observations

1. No operator can change Λ , the total global charge

Implication: trivial to construct Hamiltonian that spans only one total charge sector

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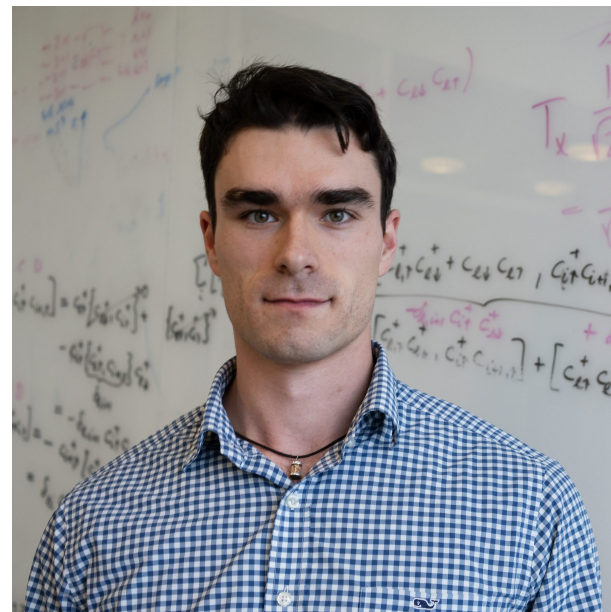
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1. No operator can change Λ , the total global charge
2. No one operator can change more than four (discrete) quantum numbers at a time
3. (Discrete) quantum numbers can only change by $\{-1, 0, 1\}$

Implication: Hamiltonian is sparse

Two Plaquette System

Work in Progress



Henry Froland



Zhiyao Li

Explicit Hamiltonian in Differential Form

General Idea: Fully gauge-fixing reduces the number of degrees of freedom

$$\begin{aligned} H = & \frac{1}{g^2} \left(4 - 2 \cos \frac{\omega_1}{2} - 2 \cos \frac{\omega_2}{2} \right) - \frac{g^2}{2} \left[4 \left(\frac{\partial^2}{\partial \omega_1^2} + \cot \frac{\omega_1}{2} \frac{\partial}{\partial \omega_1} \right) + 4 \left(\frac{\partial^2}{\partial \omega_2^2} + \cot \frac{\omega_2}{2} \frac{\partial}{\partial \omega_2} \right) \right. \\ & - 2 \cos \theta \frac{\partial}{\partial \omega_1} \frac{\partial}{\partial \omega_2} + \sin \theta \left(\cot \frac{\omega_1}{2} \frac{\partial}{\partial \omega_2} + \cot \frac{\omega_2}{2} \frac{\partial}{\partial \omega_1} + \frac{1}{2} \cot \frac{\omega_1}{2} \cot \frac{\omega_2}{2} \right) \frac{\partial}{\partial \theta} \\ & \left. - \left(2 \csc^2 \frac{\omega_1}{2} + 2 \csc^2 \frac{\omega_2}{2} + \frac{1}{2} \cos \theta \cot \frac{\omega_1}{2} \cot \frac{\omega_2}{2} - \frac{1}{2} \right) \hat{\mathcal{N}} \right] \end{aligned}$$

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 \end{aligned}$$

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$$\hat{\mathcal{N}} P_\nu(\theta) = \nu(\nu + 1) P_\nu(\theta)$$

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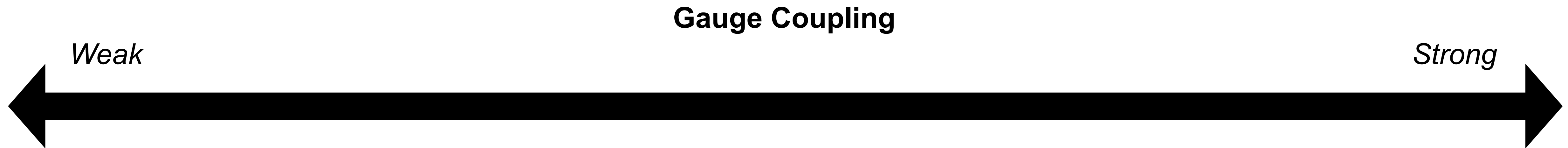
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Two Important Questions:

- Are there efficient ways to implement this on digital quantum devices?
- Can these methods easily generalize to larger number of plaquettes?

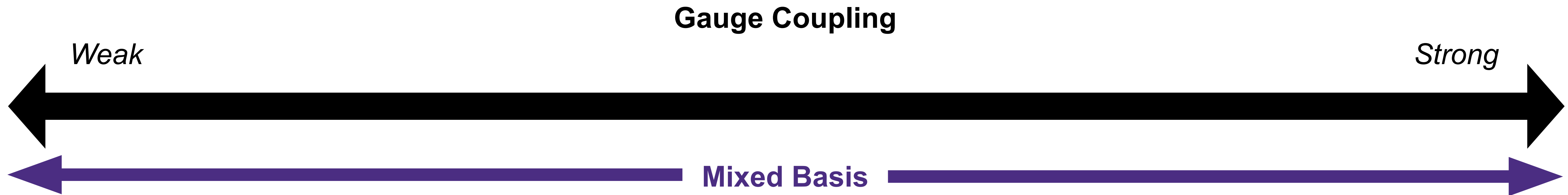
Different Discrete Bases for Two Plaquette System

General Idea: Different bases work well for different values of the gauge coupling



Different Discrete Bases for Two Plaquette System

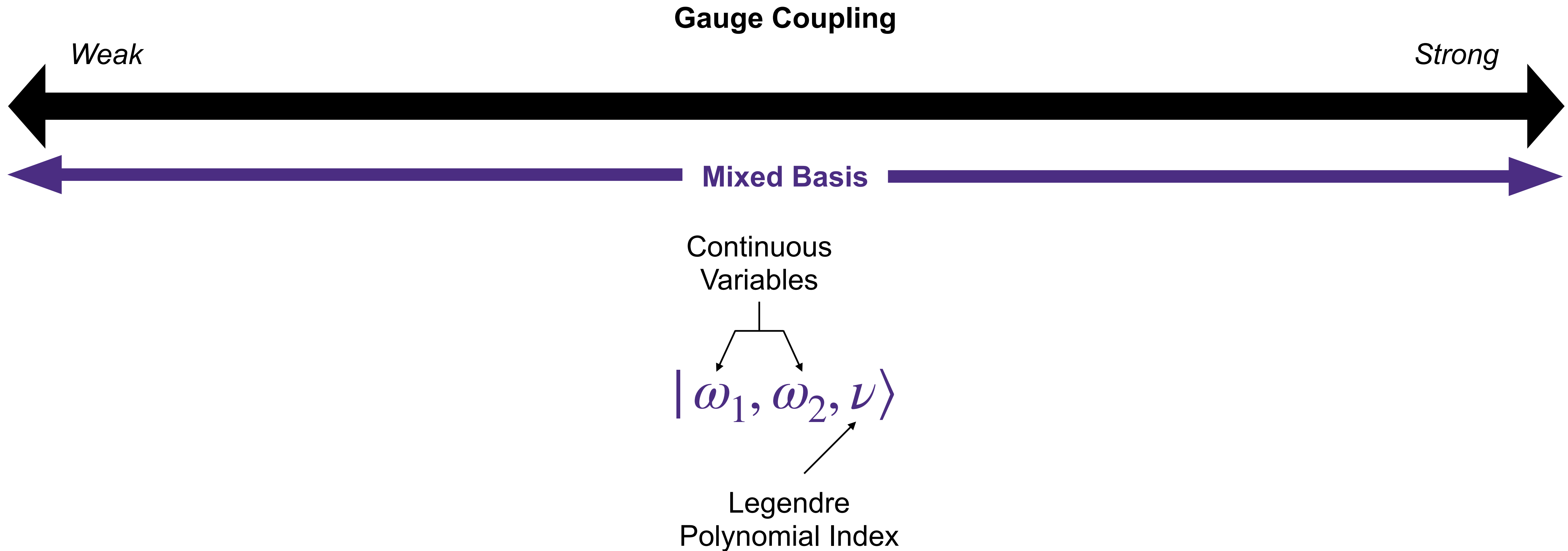
General Idea: Different bases work well for different values of the gauge coupling



$$|\omega_1, \omega_2, \nu\rangle$$

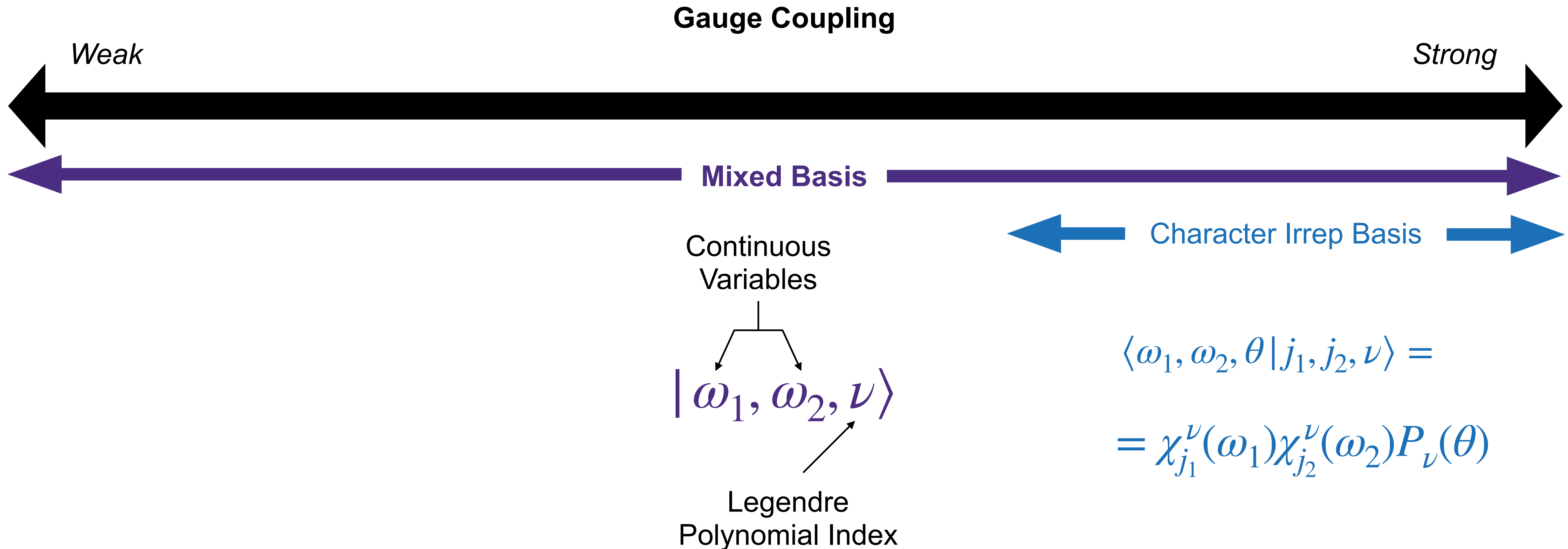
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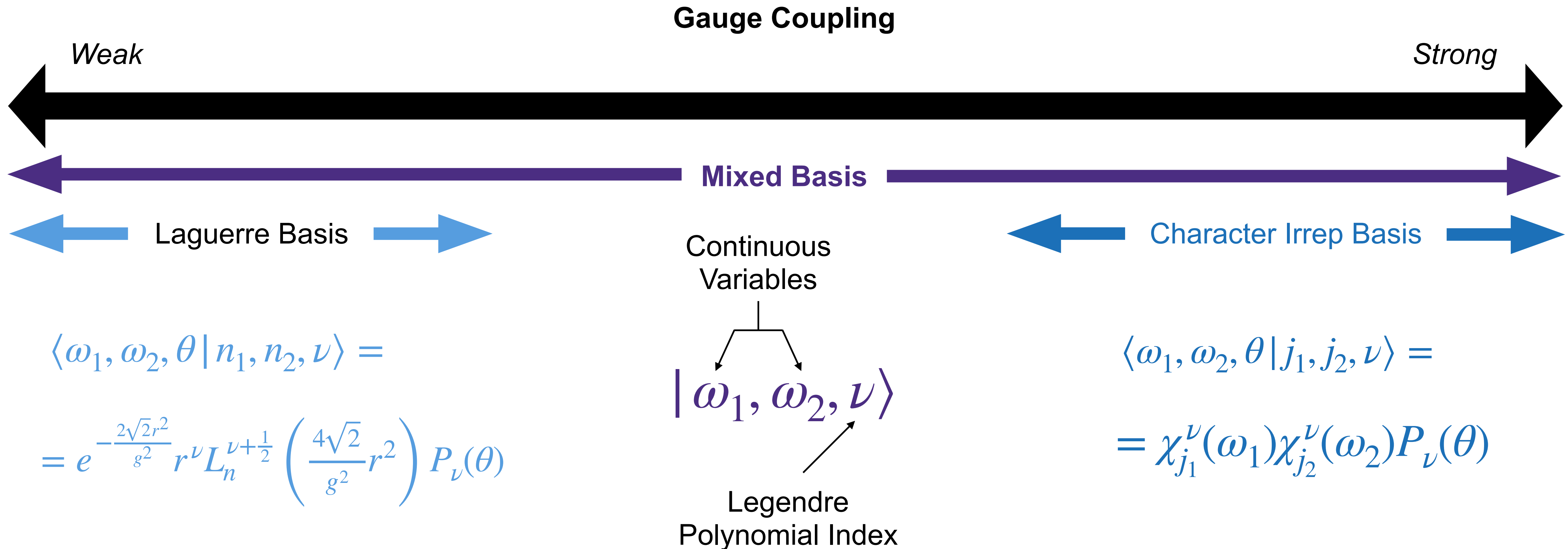
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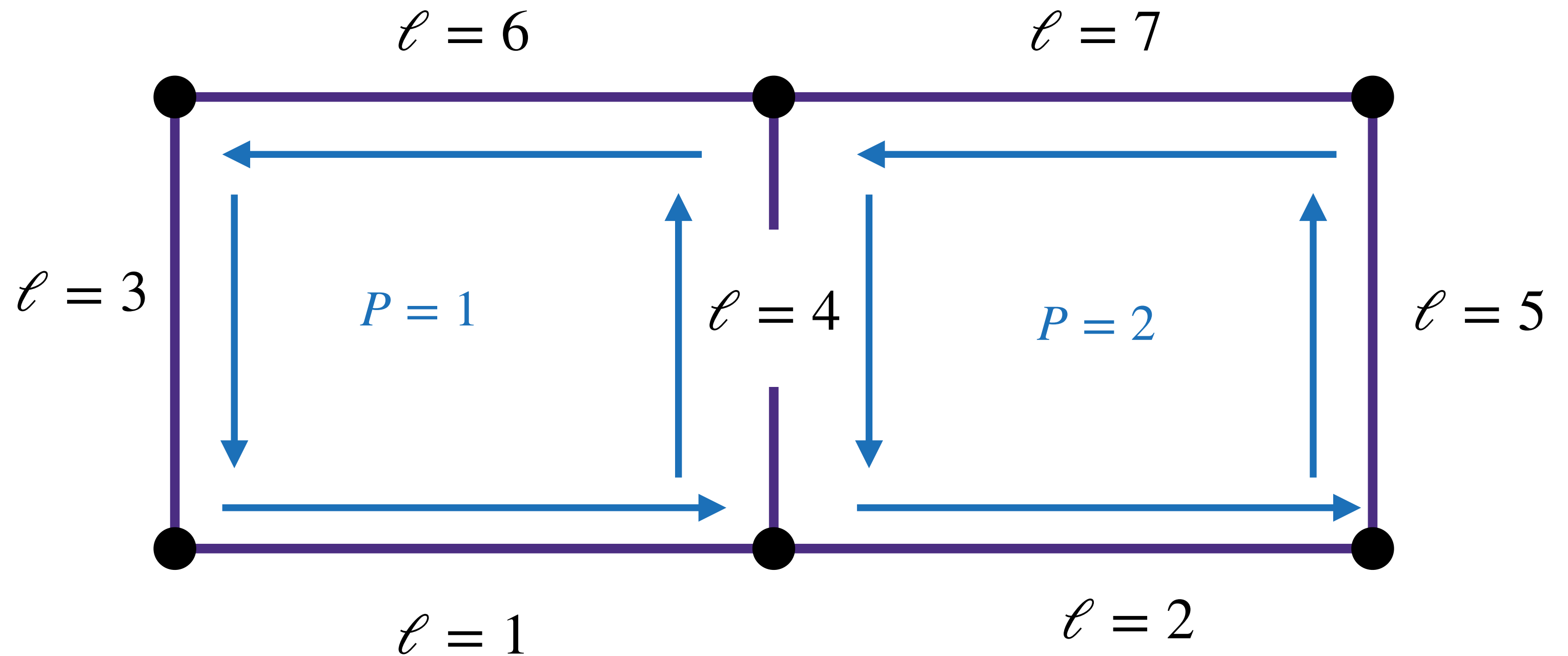
Example: Two Plaquette Universe

General Idea: Full gauge-fixing can result in resource savings

Kogut - Susskind

Irrep Basis

$$|j_\ell, m_{L\ell}, m_{R\ell}\rangle$$



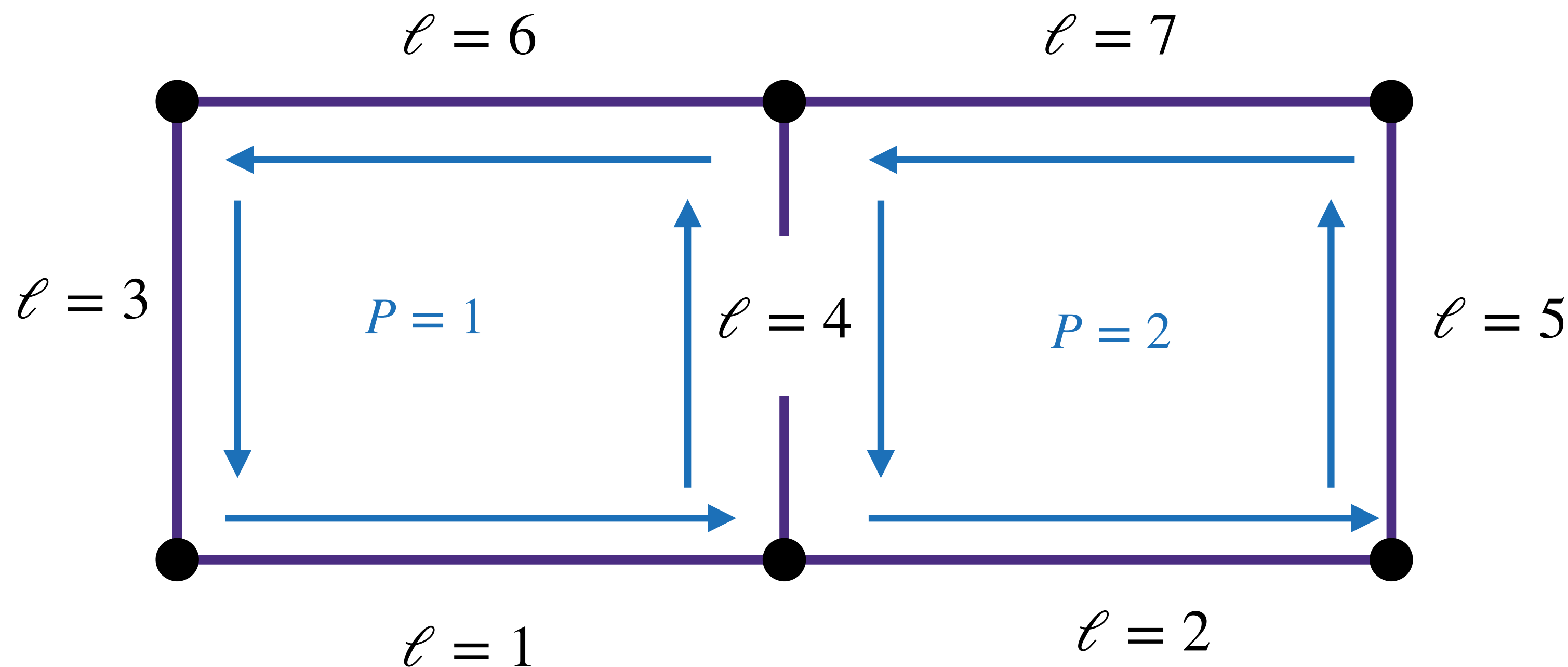
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$$\text{Dim}(\mathcal{H}(j_{\max})) : \left(\frac{1}{3}\right)^7 (8j_{\max}^3 + 18j_{\max}^2 + 13j_{\max} + 3)^7$$

$$\text{Dim}(\mathcal{H}(j_{\max} = 1)) \sim 10^8$$

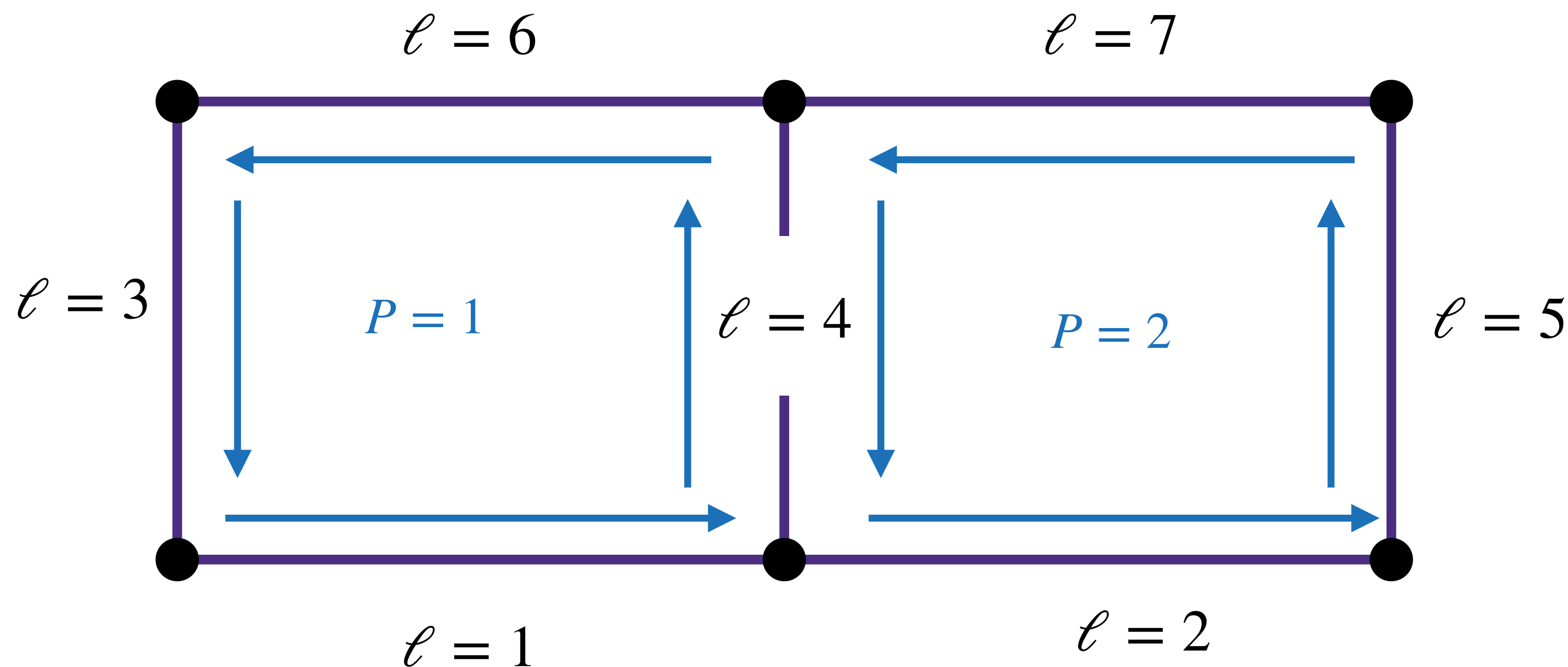
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Additional concerns: state prep and gauge violation due to truncation/Trotter

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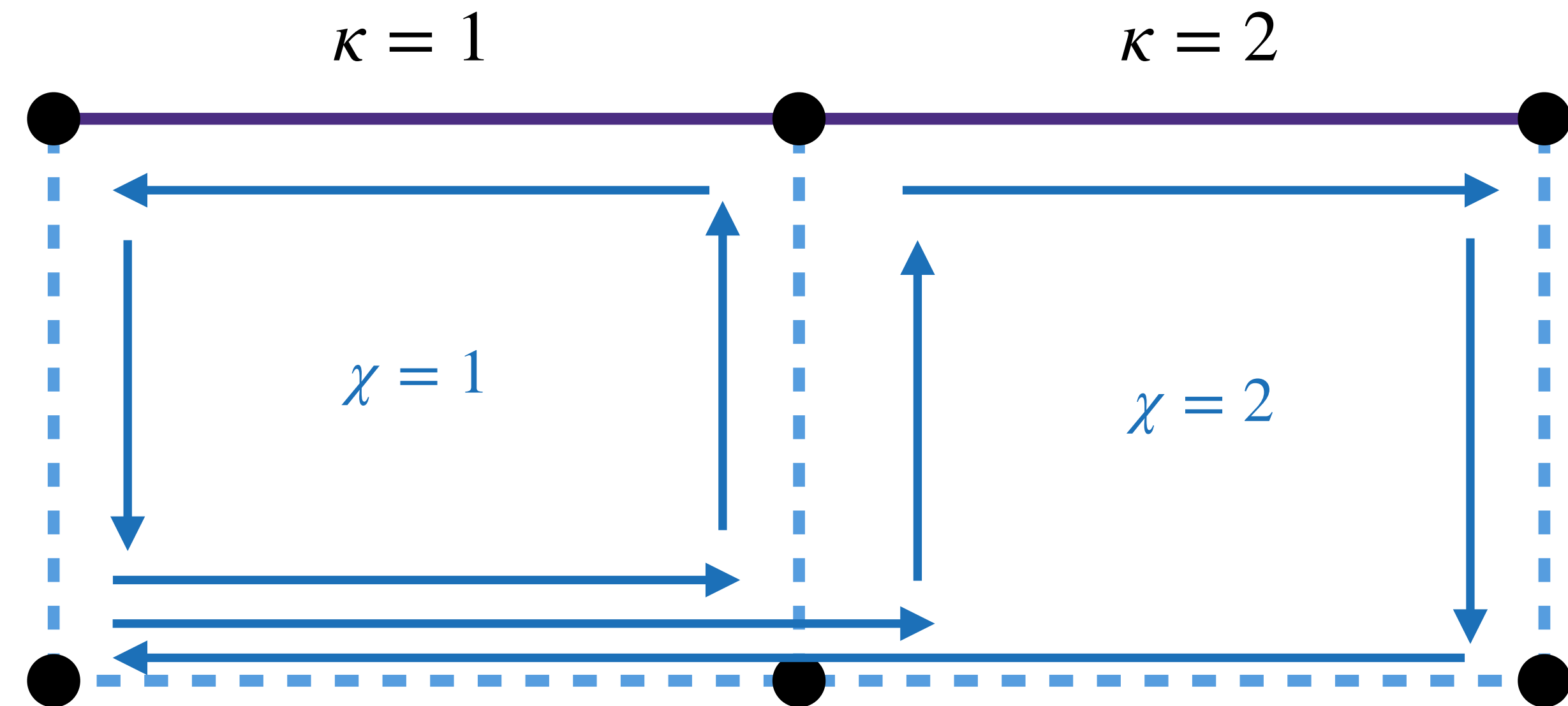
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Zero Charge Sector

Fully-Gauge Fixed

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$|j_1, j_2, \nu\rangle$



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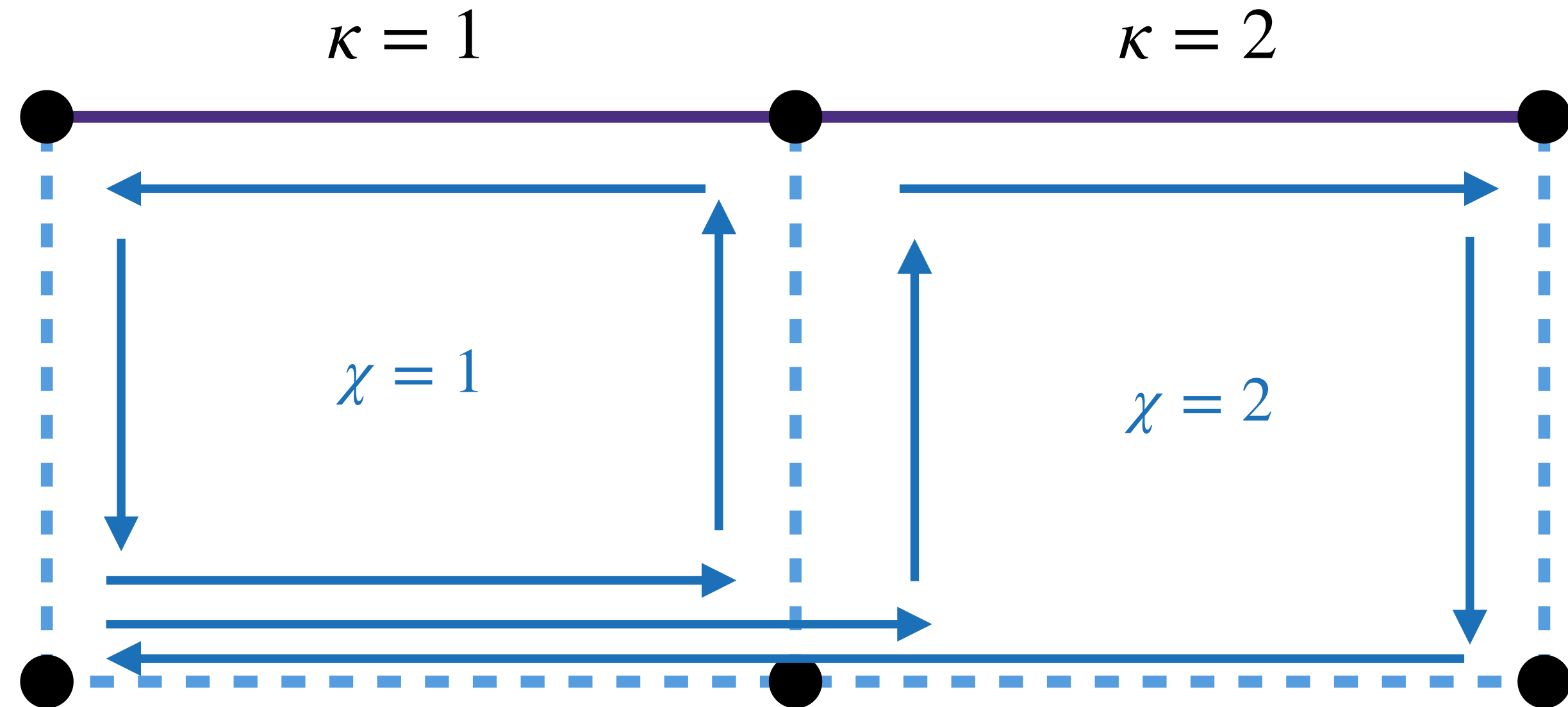
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$$\text{Dim}(\mathcal{H}(j_{\max}, \nu_{\max}) : (2j_{\max} + 1)^2 (\nu_{\max} + 1)$$

$$\text{Dim}(\mathcal{H}(j_{\max} = 2, \nu_{\max} = 2)) = 75$$

Example: Two Plaquette Universe

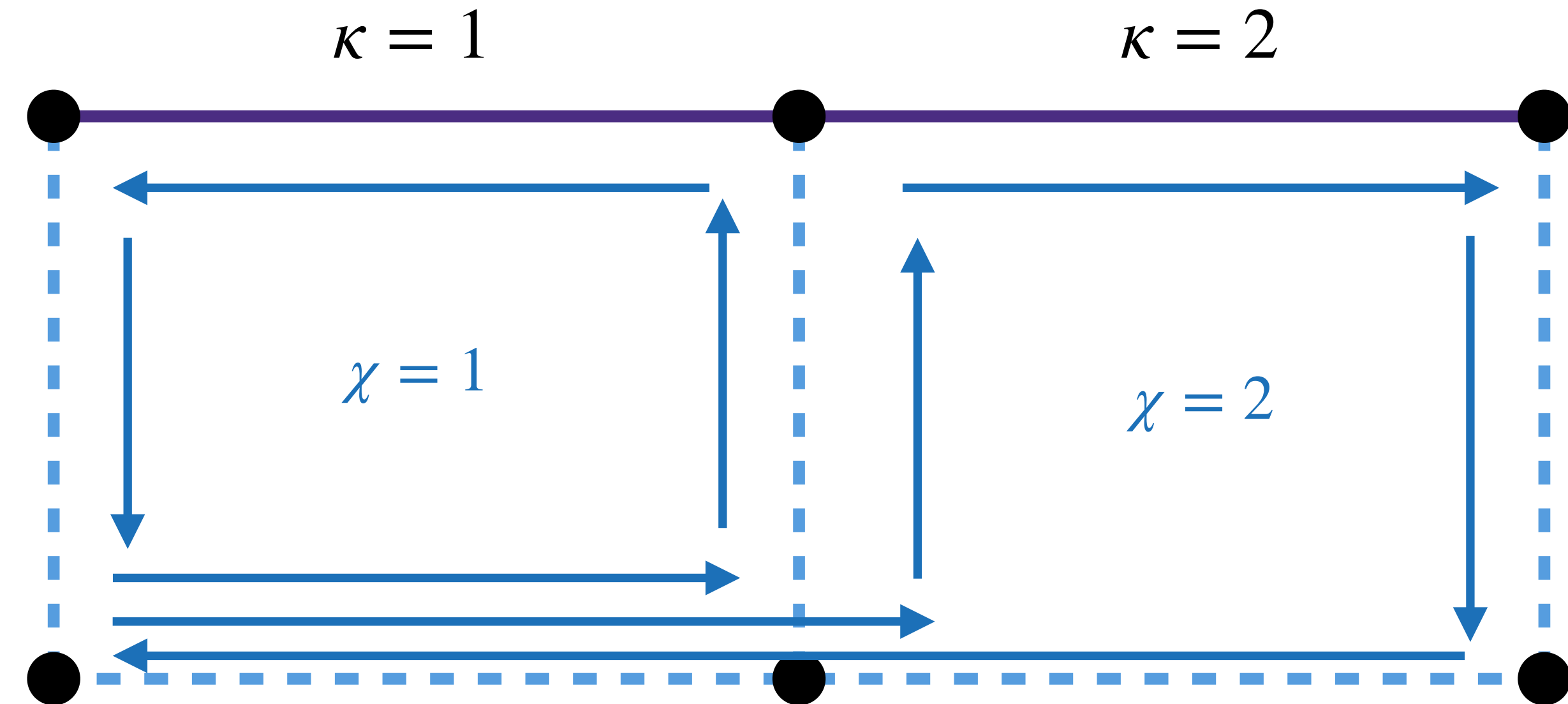
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Additional concerns: effects of non-locality as lattice volume grows

Mixed Basis Circuit Construction

General Idea: Construct circuit for each type of term independently and stitch them together

Seven types of terms

$\partial_{\omega_1}^2$	$f_0(\omega_1)$	$f_1(\omega_1)\partial_{\omega_1}$	$f_2(\omega_2, \nu)\partial_{\omega_1}$	$f_3(\nu)\partial_{\omega_1}\partial_{\omega_2}$	$f_4(\omega_1, \nu)$	$f_5(\omega_1, \omega_2, \nu)$
$\partial_{\omega_2}^2$	$f_0(\omega_2)$	$f_1(\omega_2)\partial_{\omega_2}$	$f_2(\omega_1, \nu)\partial_{\omega_2}$		$f_4(\omega_2, \nu)$	

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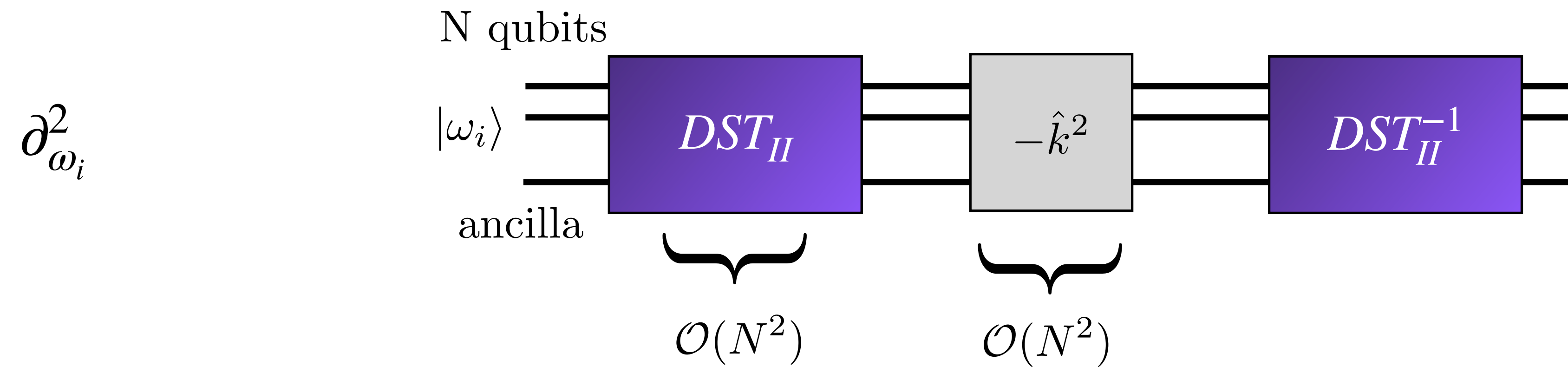
$\partial_{\omega_1}^2$	$f_0(\omega_1)$	$f_1(\omega_1)\partial_{\omega_1}$	$f_2(\omega_2, \nu)\partial_{\omega_1}$		$f_4(\omega_1, \nu)$	
				$f_3(\nu)\partial_{\omega_1}\partial_{\omega_2}$		$f_5(\omega_1, \omega_2, \nu)$
$\partial_{\omega_2}^2$	$f_0(\omega_2)$	$f_1(\omega_2)\partial_{\omega_2}$	$f_2(\omega_1, \nu)\partial_{\omega_2}$		$f_4(\omega_2, \nu)$	

Two Possible Approaches: Implementing these terms can be done in two (related) ways

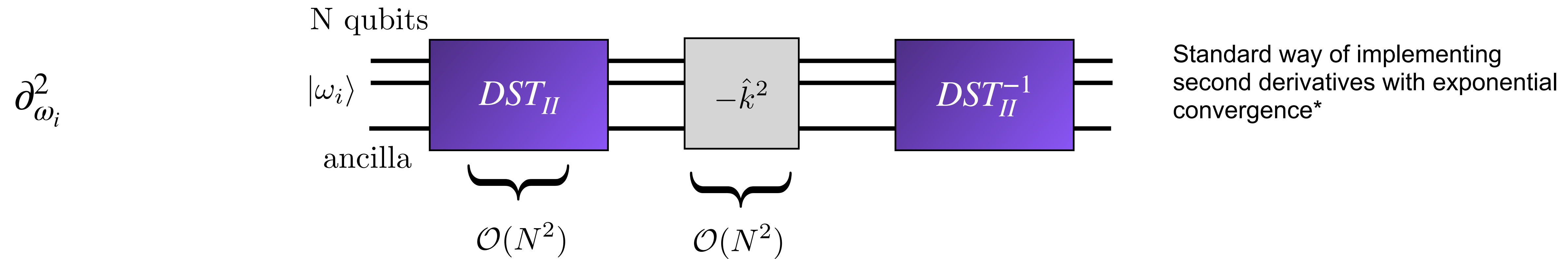
- (Asymptotic Approach): Determine circuits for each term individually
- NISQ Approach: Decompose terms into Pauli strings and use truncation and clever orderings to cancel as many CNOTs as possible

Mixed Basis Circuit Construction, Asymptotic Approach

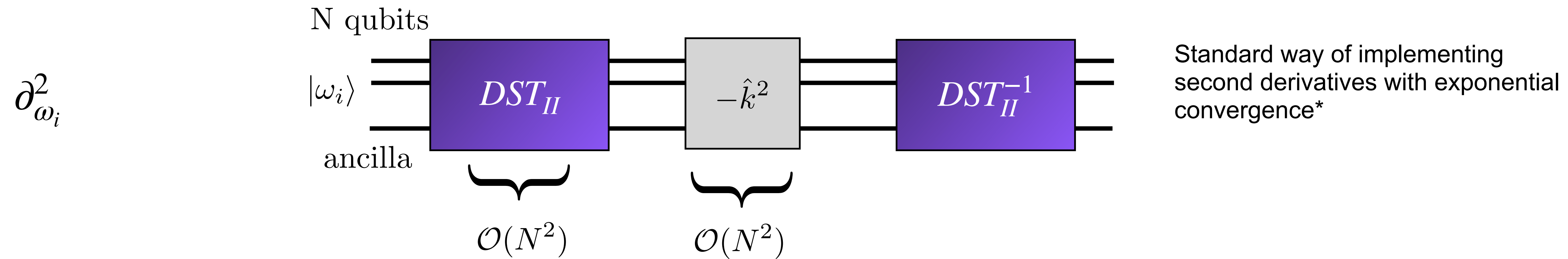
Mixed Basis Circuit Construction, Asymptotic Approach



Mixed Basis Circuit Construction, Asymptotic Approach

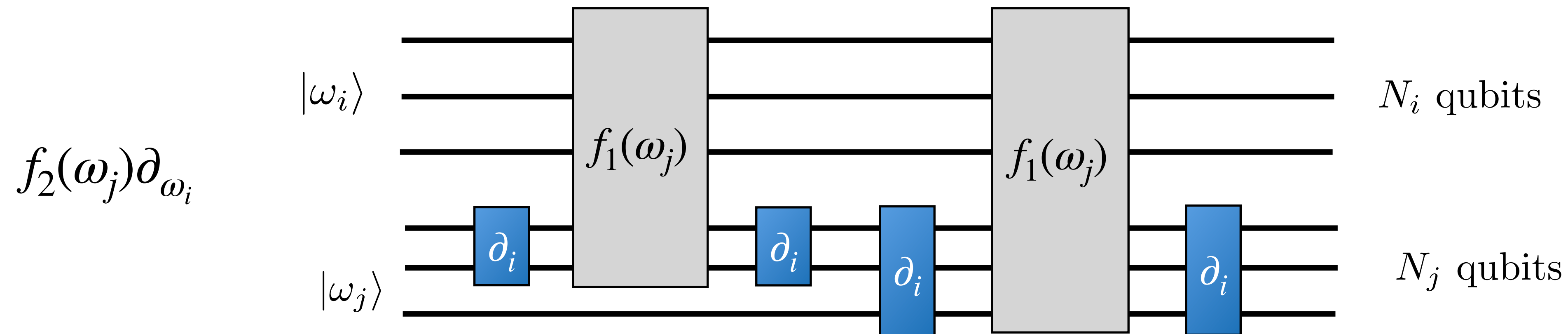
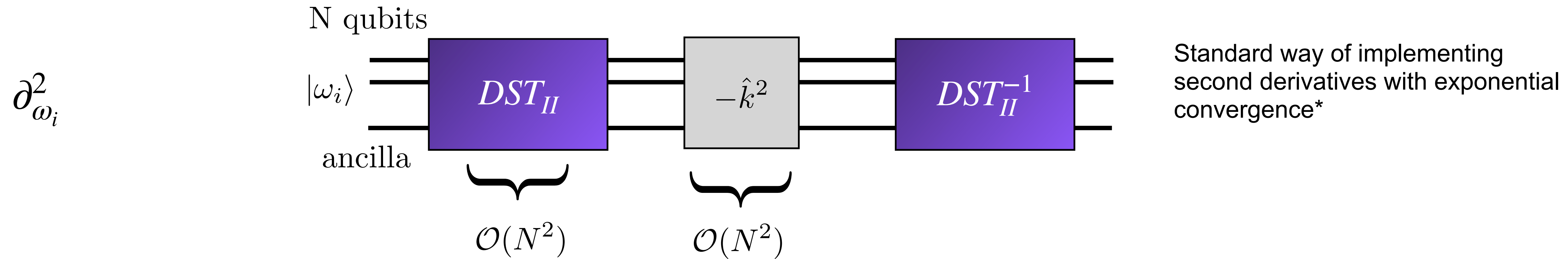


Mixed Basis Circuit Construction, Asymptotic Approach

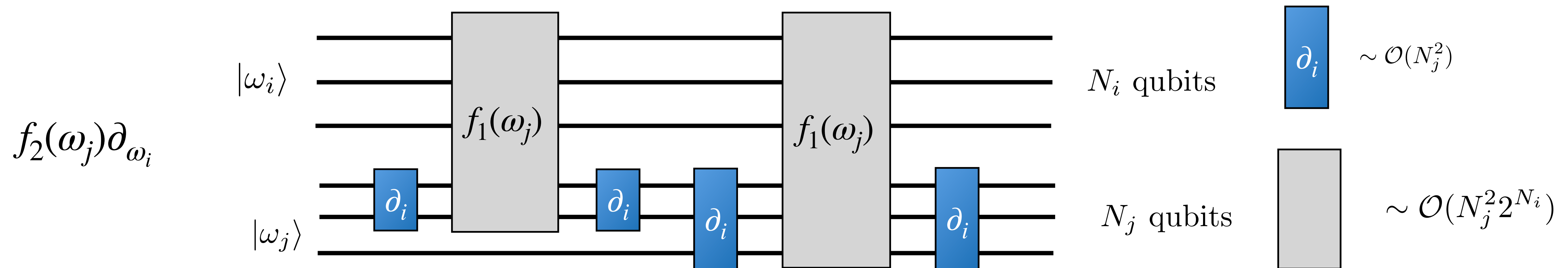
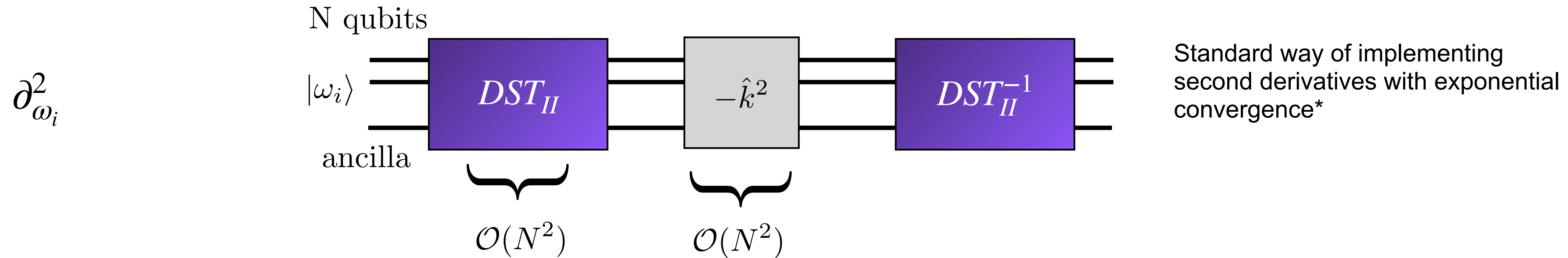


$$f_2(\omega_j) \partial_{\omega_i}$$

Mixed Basis Circuit Construction, Asymptotic Approach



Mixed Basis Circuit Construction, Asymptotic Approach



Exponential CNOT gate is $f_1(\omega_j)$ is due to this being a trigonometric function - approximation dramatically reduces overhead cost

Mixed Basis Circuit Construction, NISQ Approach

General Idea: Decompose each term in Hamiltonian into Pauli strings and optimize

$$H = \sum_k \beta_k H_k = \sum_k \sum_{i \in S(P_k)} c_i \mathcal{P}_i \quad \mathcal{P}_i = \bigotimes_{\ell \in i} \sigma_{\ell}^{\alpha_{i\ell}}$$

S_k = support of H_k and P_k is power set

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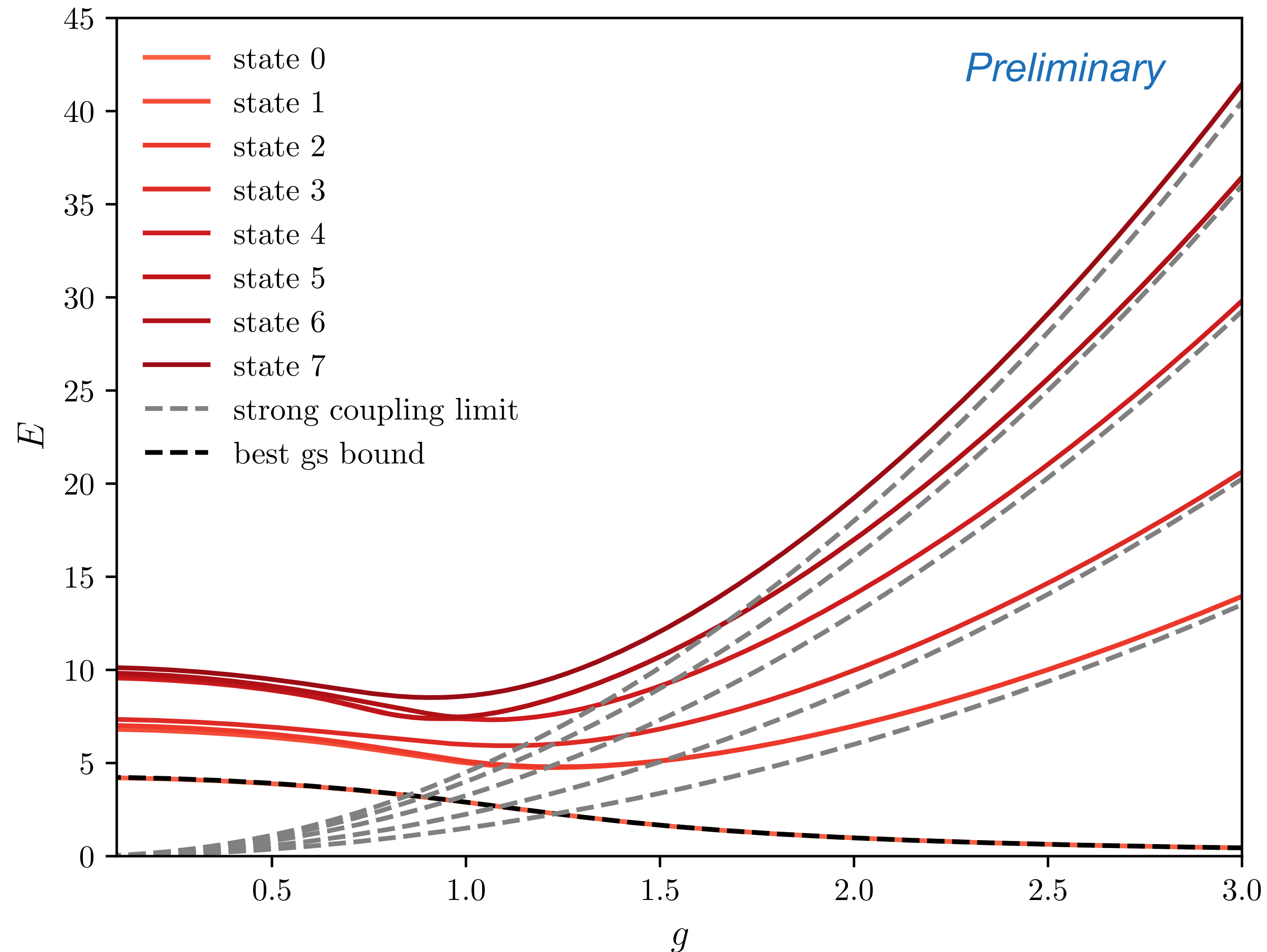
General Comments:

- Generically there are $4^{\#(S_k)}$ terms
- Choose some truncation scale ϵ and ignore all smaller rotations
- Hardest terms to implement (most non-local, highest weight) have smaller coefficients - even mild truncations gives biggest savings
- Usefulness depends on truncation

Energy Spectrum Results

Energy Spectrum for Two Plaquette System using mixed basis formulation

- Three qubits per ω and one for ν
- Strong coupling limit is result for character irrep formulation
- Best ground state bound is PDE (FEM) solver result
- Laguerre results will be added



Conclusions

Simulating non-Abelian gauge theories on digital quantum devices necessitates balancing the requirements of gauge invariance, efficiency for fine lattices and systematic improvability

Main Take-Away Point 1: Gauge fixing allows for constructing Hamiltonians in the group element basis, allowing for efficient simulations at weak coupling*

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* Do not worry: we are thinking about how to extend this to go to SU(3) and include fermions

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Main Take-Away Point 1: Gauge fixing allows for constructing Hamiltonians in the group element basis, allowing for efficient simulations at weak coupling*

Main Take-Away Point 2: Non-local interactions do not always result in highly connected systems and exponential resource scaling

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