

**ICMA  
2021**

# 1st International Conference on Micromachines and Applications

15–30 APRIL 2021 | **ONLINE**

A deep learning-based approach to uncertainty  
quantification for polysilicon MEMS



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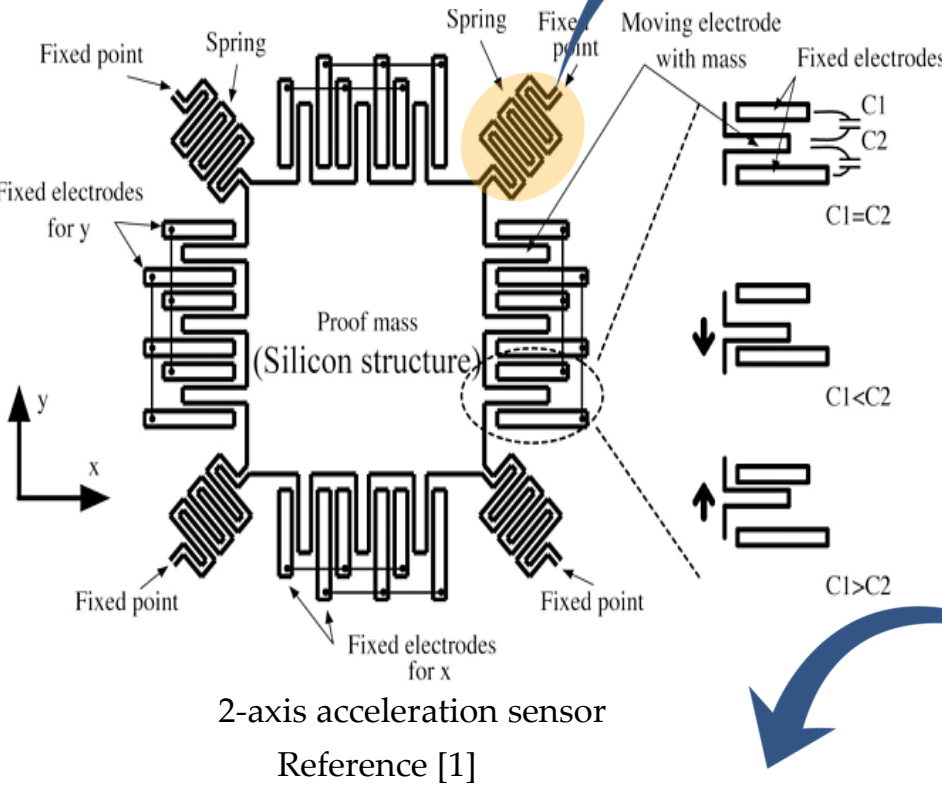
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# Graphical Abstract

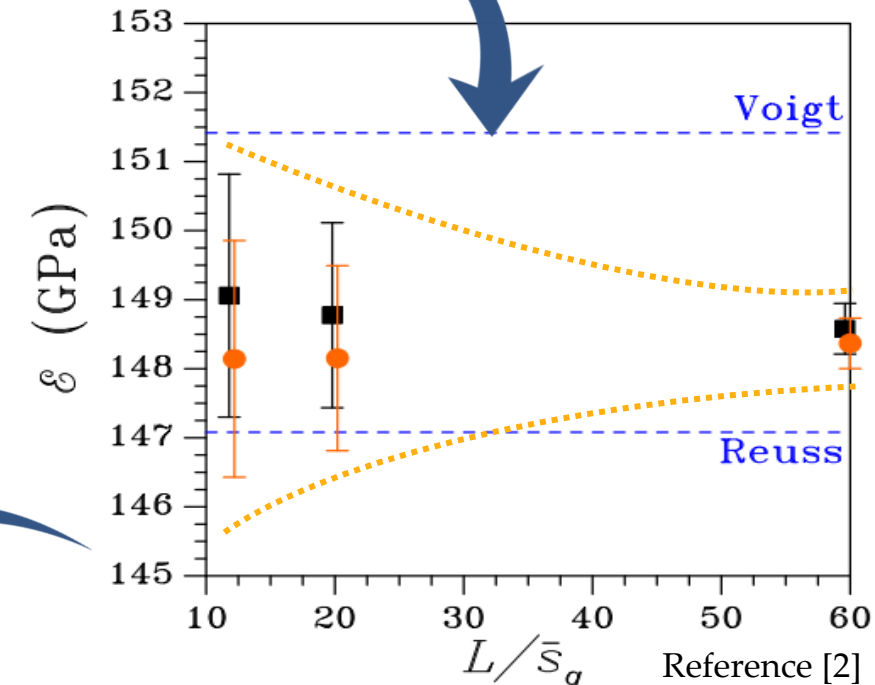
## 1. Typical structure of an inertial MEMS



SVE  
Statistical Volume  
Element

2. Overall properties are realization-dependent

Length scale separation principle for RVE does not hold ( $L/\bar{s}_g \neq \infty$ )



4. Idea: Training a neural network to catch this variation automatically !

3. Scattering in the overall properties

Dependent of the micromechanical features of the polycrystal: topology of grain boundary and lattice orientations

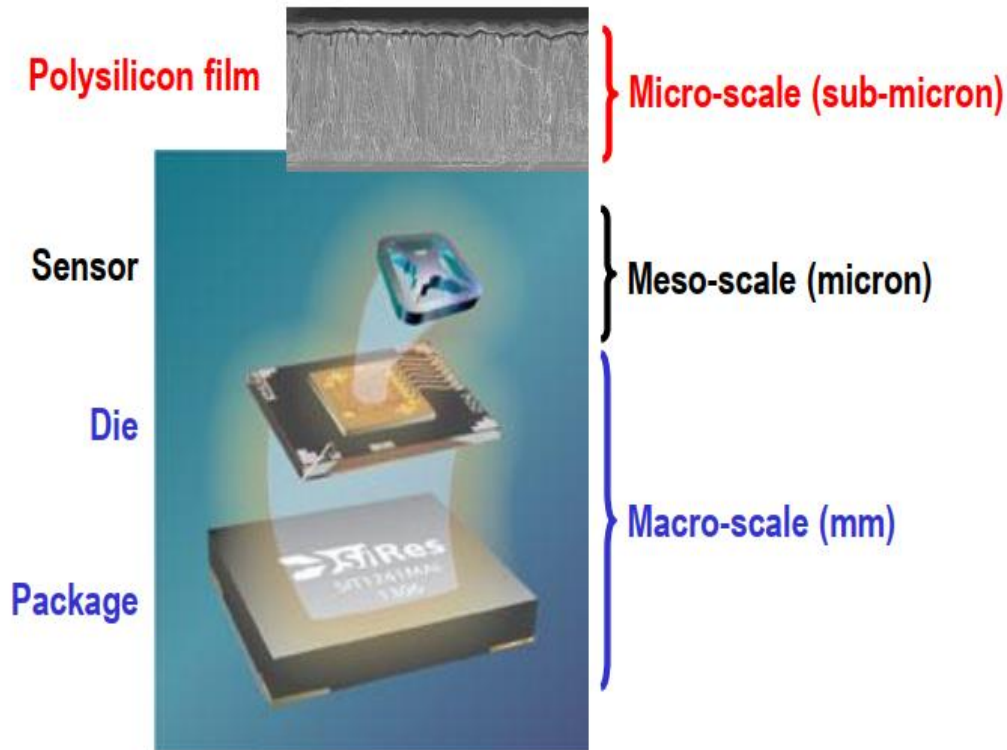
# Abstract

The path towards miniaturization for micro electro-mechanical systems (MEMS) has recently increased the effects of stochastic variability at the (sub)micron scale on the overall performance of the devices. We recently proposed and designed an on-chip testing device to characterize two sources of variability that majorly affect the scattering in the response to the external actions of inertial (statically determinate) micromachines: the morphology of the polysilicon film constituting the movable parts of the device; and the environment-affected overetch linked to the microfabrication process. A fully stochastic model of the entire device has been set to account for these two sources on the measurable response of the devices, e.g. in terms of the relevant C-V curves up to pull-in. A complexity in the mentioned model is represented by the need to assess the stochastic (local) stiffness of polysilicon, depending on its unknown (local) microstructure. In this work, we discuss a deep learning approach to the micromechanical characterization of polysilicon films, based on artificial neural networks (NNs). Such NNs extract relevant features of the polysilicon morphology from SEM-like Voronoi tessellation-based digital microstructures. The NN-based model or surrogate is shown to correctly catch size effects at a varying ratio between the characteristic size of the structural components of the device, and the morphology-induced length scale of the aggregate of silicon grains. This property of the model looks indeed necessary, to prove the generalization capability of the learning process, and to next feed Monte Carlo simulations resting on the model of the entire device.

**Keywords:** Polysilicon MEMS; stochastic variability; homogenization; deep learning; NN-based surrogate.

# Introduction

## Different length-scales in inertial MEMS



1. Decoupling between **macro-** and meso-scale ?

Allowed by small inertia of the sensor. Interaction between different scales (in case of dynamics) is **driven by the mass because of inertial forces.**

2. Decoupling between meso- and **micro-scale?**

Not possible! For a reliability assessment, particular focus has to be given to the slender parts in these inertial systems (most prone to fail), whose response strongly **depends in the underlying microstructure.**

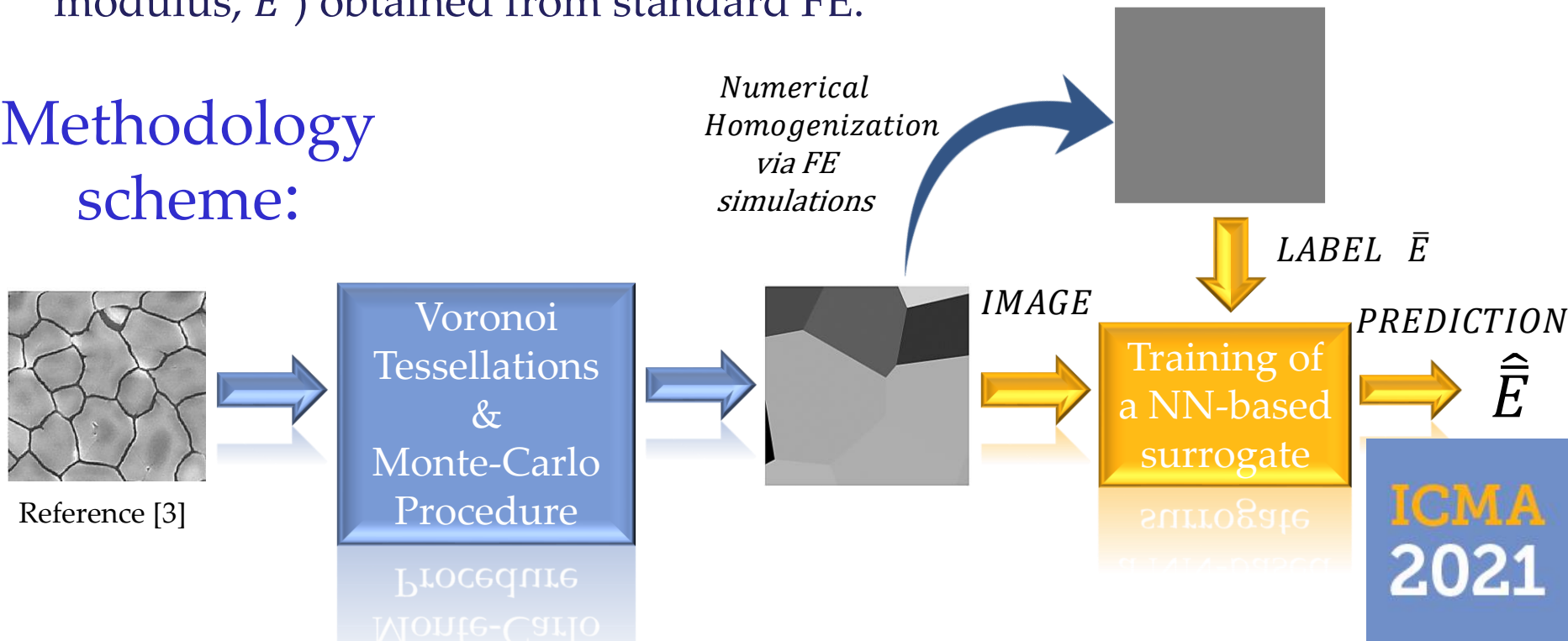
3. Our goal is to predict the **maximum scattering** that can be expected in the results (in the context of **homogenization**) exclusively due to intrinsic features present in the polycrystalline material constituting these devices.



# Objectives

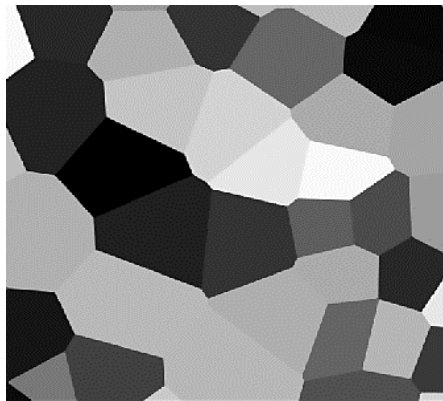
1. Propose an **alternative approach** to standard homogenization techniques.
2. Generate **microstructure-property mappings** to characterize the mechanical reliability of inertial MEMS whose movable structures are made of polysilicon films.
3. Train and test a **NN-based surrogate** that combines the sequential use of a CNN and a MLP. **Input** : 2D statistically representative images. As **labels**: theoretical values of the homogenized property (in-plane *apparent* Young's modulus,  $\bar{E}$  ) obtained from standard FE.

## Methodology scheme:



# Novelty of the work

Once the model has been trained, the possibility to feed images representative of different length-scales allows for a fast multiscale exploration and characterization of the **size effects** !



$$\frac{L}{\bar{s}_g} = \frac{5\mu\text{m}}{0.5\mu\text{m}} = 10$$



$$\frac{L}{\bar{s}_g} = \frac{3\mu\text{m}}{0.5\mu\text{m}} = 6$$



$$\frac{L}{\bar{s}_g} = \frac{2\mu\text{m}}{0.5\mu\text{m}} = 4$$

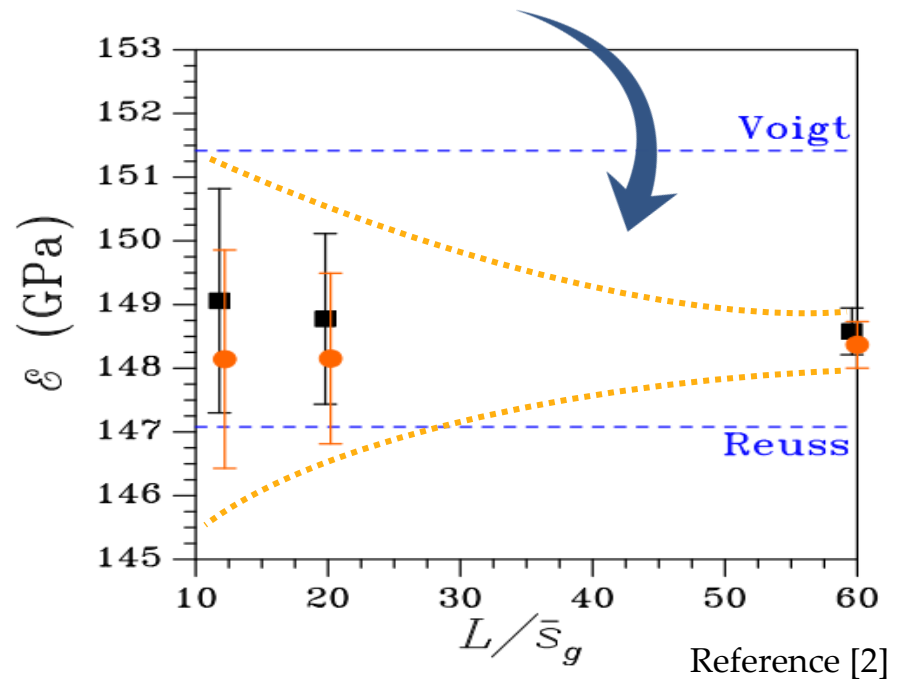


Trained  
NN-based  
surrogate



$\hat{\bar{E}}$

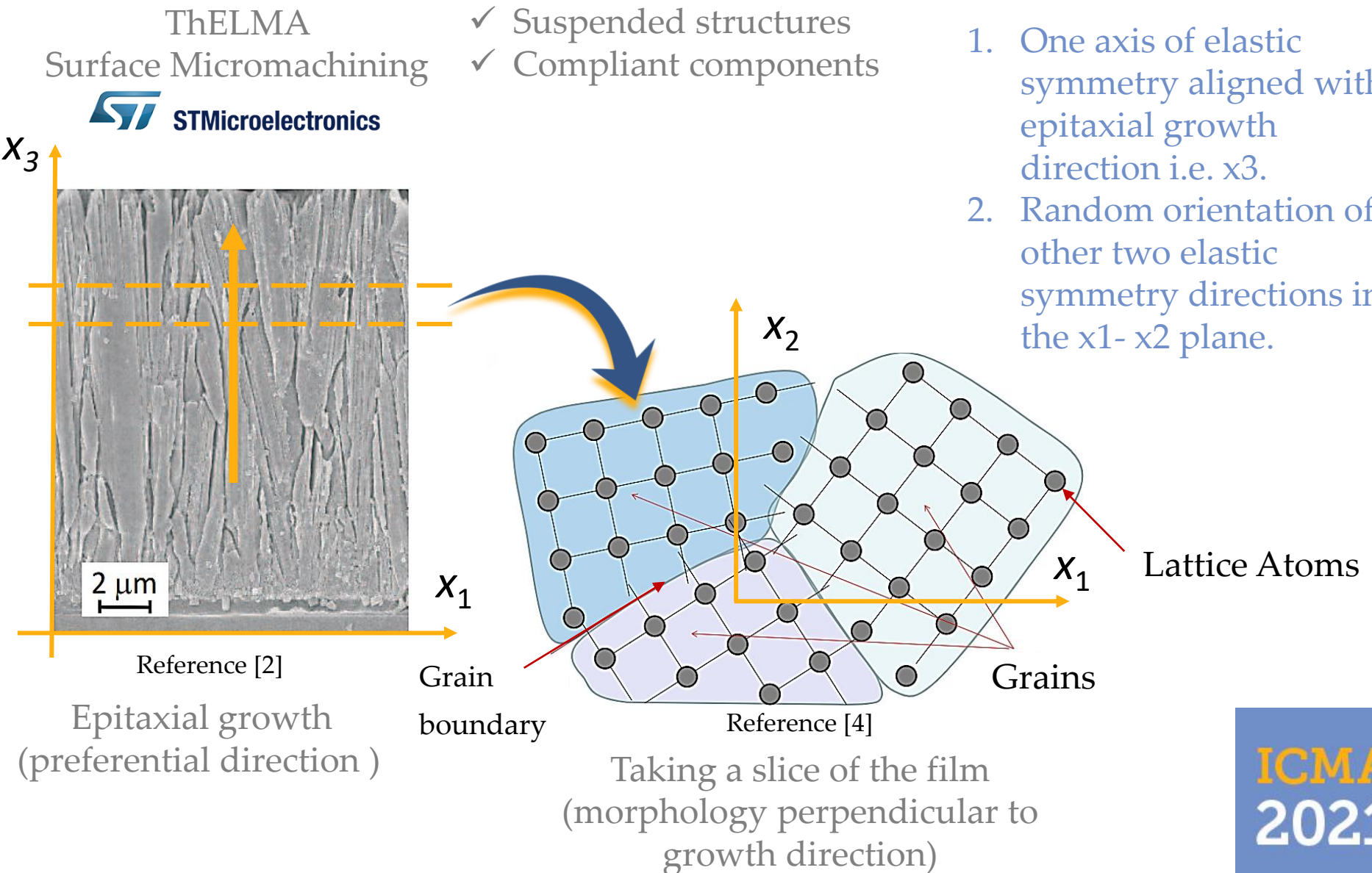
**Size effects:** The lower the ratio  $L/\bar{s}_g$  the larger the scattering of the overall properties around the mean



# Methodology: Polysilicon Film Morphology

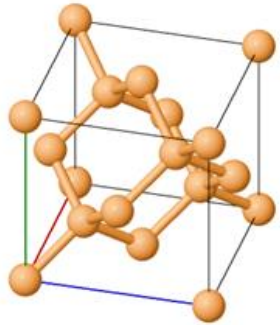
Summarizing:

1. One axis of elastic symmetry aligned with epitaxial growth direction i.e.  $x_3$ .
2. Random orientation of other two elastic symmetry directions in the  $x_1$ - $x_2$  plane.



# Methodology: Monocrystalline Silicon

## 1. Single-crystalline silicon



Diamond cubic lattice  
(Anisotropic elasticity)

Stiffness coefficient  
matrix **depends on the  
crystal orientation**

Reference [5]

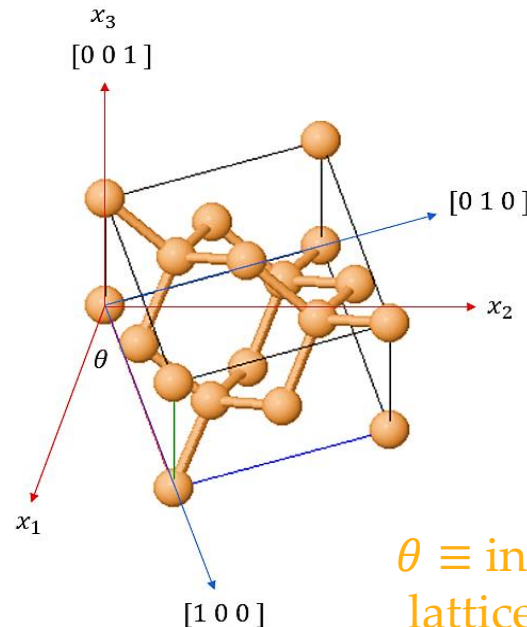
## 2. Stiffness Matrix of Silicon

$$\begin{pmatrix} 165.64 & 63.94 & 63.94 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 63.94 & 165.64 & 63.94 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 63.94 & 63.94 & 165.64 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 79.51 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 79.51 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 79.51 \end{pmatrix}$$

$\langle 100 \rangle$  aligned with  $(x_1 \ x_2 \ x_3)$   
Reported in [GPa]

## 3. Account for lattice orientations

By introducing the  
appropriate  
transformation of the  
stiffness matrix (tensor  
transformation law)

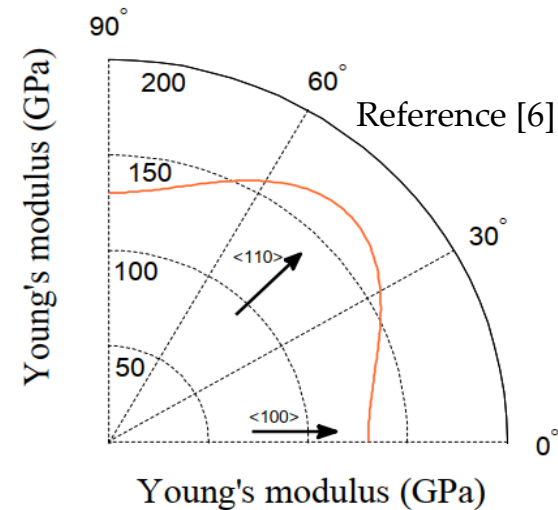


$\theta \equiv$  in-plane  
lattice orientation

## 4. Directional variation of the in-plane Young's modulus

In  $\langle 100 \rangle$   $E = 130$  GPa

In  $\langle 110 \rangle$   $E = 169$  GPa

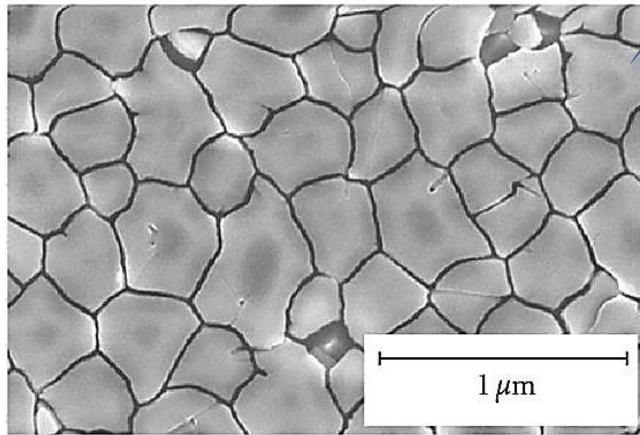


Elastic modulus of  
monocrystalline Si  
under in-plane rotations  
ranging  $0 \leq \theta \leq 90^\circ$



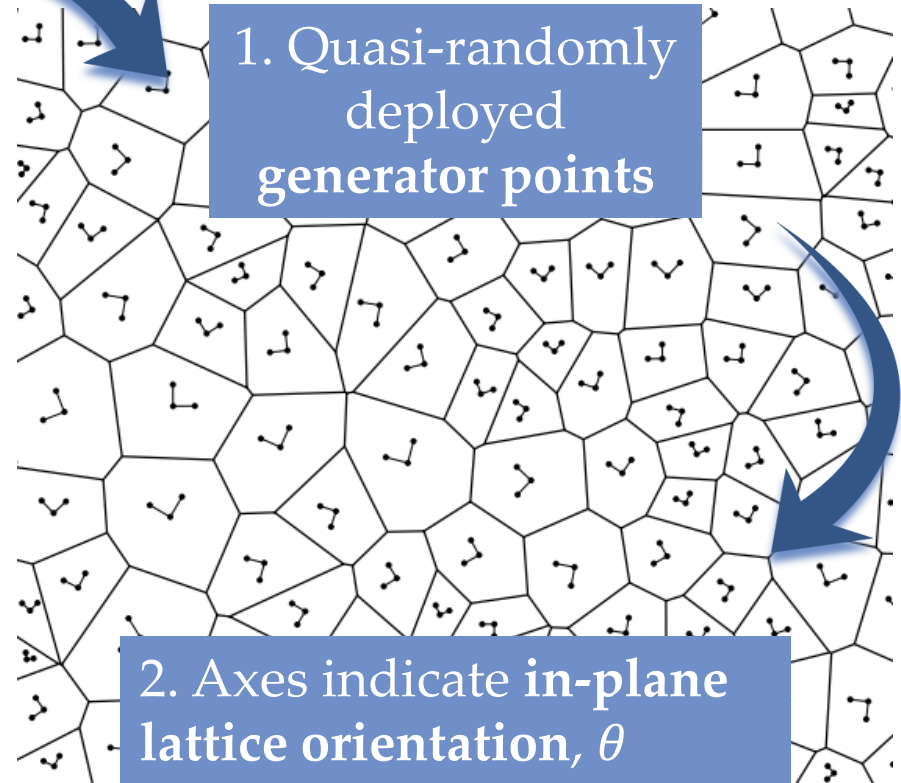
# Methodology: Input Data Generation (1)

## Real Microstructure (Poly-Si Thin-Film)



Reference [3]

## Digital Microstructure (Voronoi Tessellation)



Reference [2]

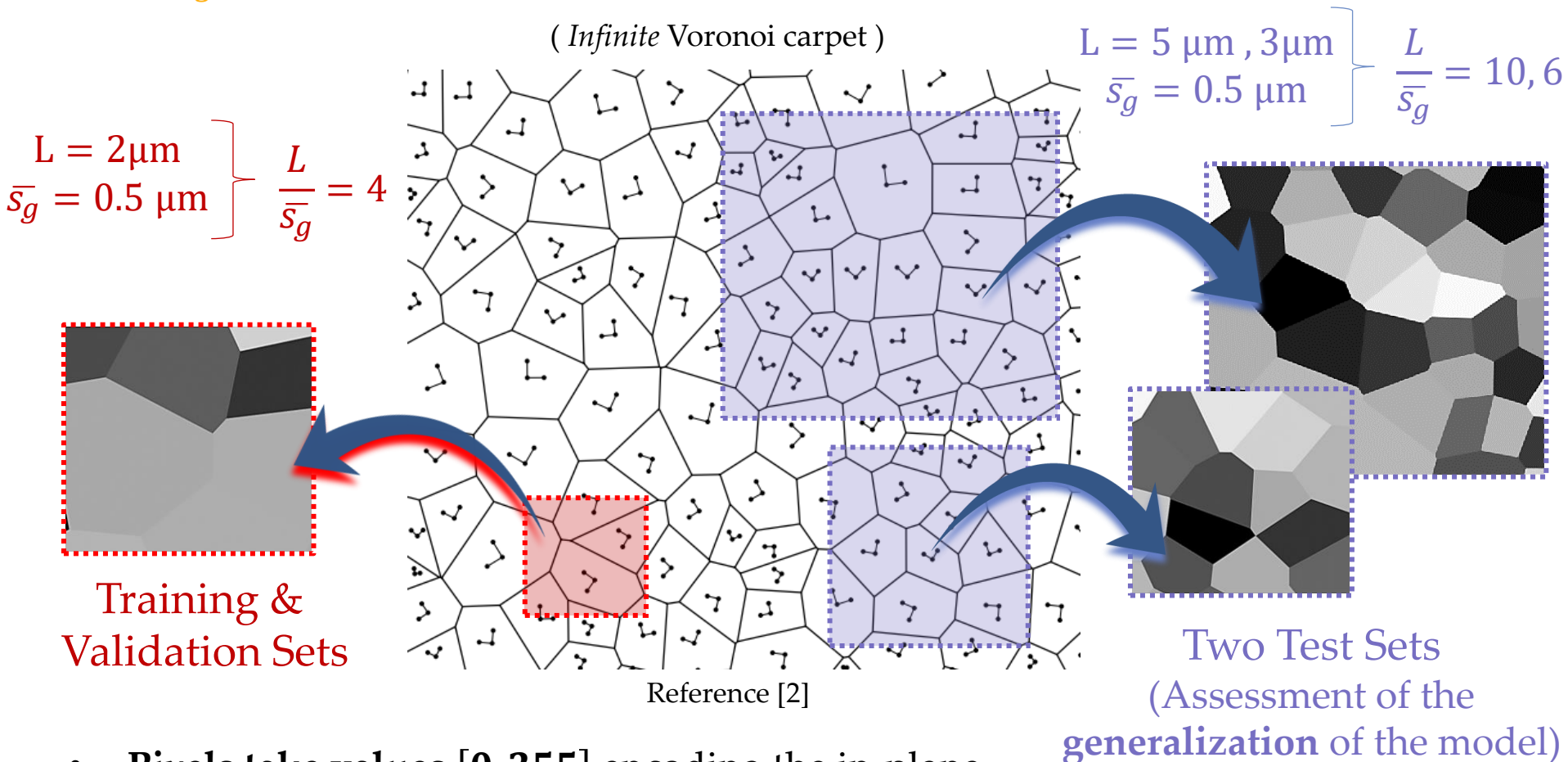
Monte Carlo simulations exploited to account for the stochastic effects of:

- ✓ Topology of grain boundaries (deployment sites)
- ✓ Lattice orientations ( $\theta$ )

✓ Lattice orientations ( $\theta$ )  
(deployment sites)

# Methodology: Input Data Generation (2)

Each  $L/\bar{s}_g$  ratio is linked to a different scattering. Is our model able to catch it ?



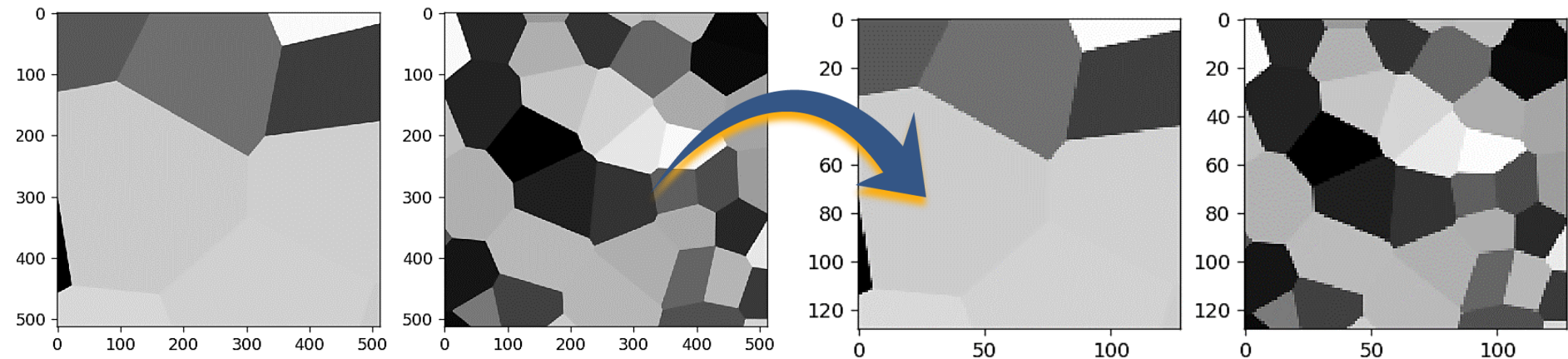
- **Pixels take values [0, 255]** encoding the in-plane lattice orientation  $\theta$  (related to the directional variation of the in-plane Young's modulus)
- **Ground-truth data** (labels) for SVEs come from standard FE simulations

# Methodology: Input Data Pre-Processing

1. Median Filter to reduce artifacts (pixels with incorrect values)
2. Resolution Adjustment: reduction of image size (pixels) by a factor of 16

Initial resolution : 512×512 pixels.

Finally adopted resolution: 128×128 pixels.



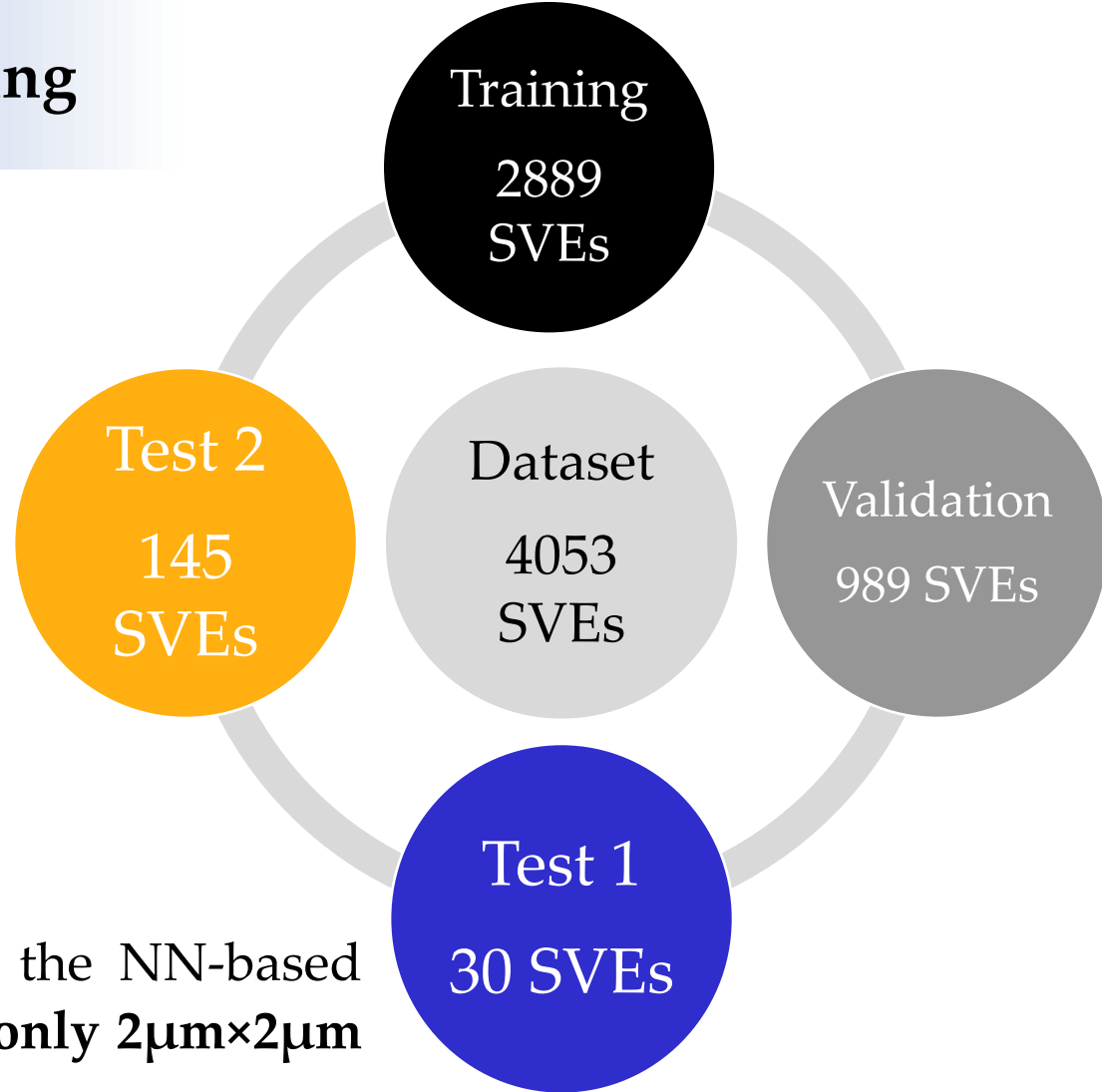
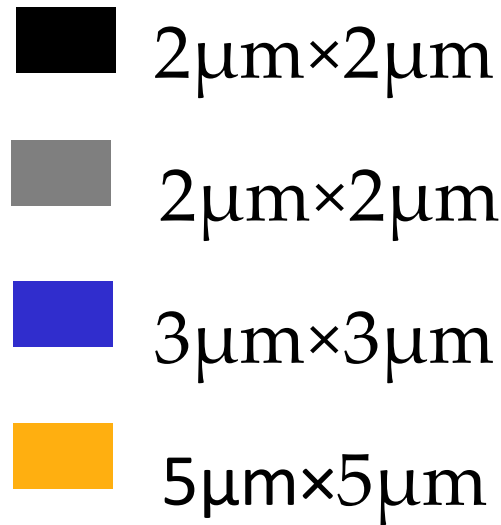
For example, for the ResNet18-based model:

Using initial resolution: ~ 72 s/epoch, Training time ~ 2.5 hours, Max. BS=10

Using final resolution: ~ 4 s/epoch, Training time ~ 8 min, Max. BS=300

Speed up the training without sacrificing model accuracy!  
(test error was checked)

# Methodology: Data Splitting



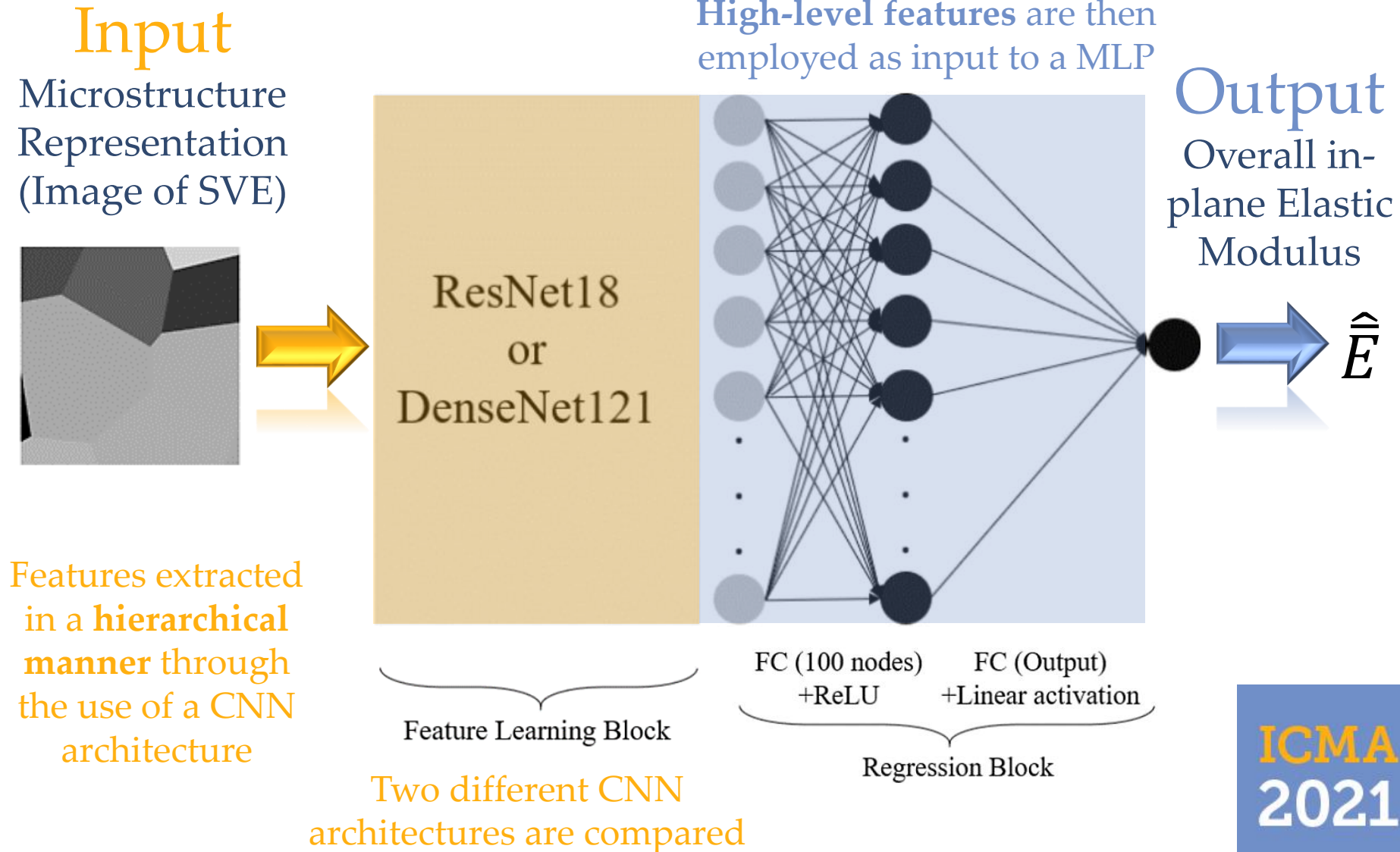
1. Training and validation of the NN-based surrogate is performed **using only  $2\mu\text{m} \times 2\mu\text{m}$  SVE samples!**

2. At a later stage, **generalization of the model** is assessed by evaluating the predictions over  **$3\mu\text{m} \times 3\mu\text{m}$  and  $5\mu\text{m} \times 5\mu\text{m}$  SVE samples!**



# Methodology: Model Implementation (1)

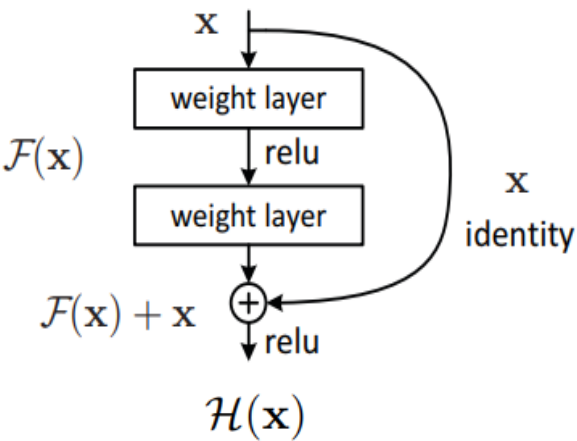
- Neural Network Architecture: Symbolic description of the models



# Methodology: Model Implementation (2)

- CNN Architecture: Residual Networks

Residual learning framework based in skip-connections



Reference [7]

Family of ResNet Architectures

layer name	output size	18-layer	34-layer	50-layer	101-layer	152-layer
conv1	112×112	7×7, 64, stride 2				
conv2_x	56×56	3×3 max pool, stride 2				
		$\begin{bmatrix} 3\times 3, 64 \\ 3\times 3, 64 \end{bmatrix} \times 2$	$\begin{bmatrix} 3\times 3, 64 \\ 3\times 3, 64 \end{bmatrix} \times 3$	$\begin{bmatrix} 1\times 1, 64 \\ 3\times 3, 64 \\ 1\times 1, 256 \end{bmatrix} \times 3$	$\begin{bmatrix} 1\times 1, 64 \\ 3\times 3, 64 \\ 1\times 1, 256 \end{bmatrix} \times 3$	$\begin{bmatrix} 1\times 1, 64 \\ 3\times 3, 64 \\ 1\times 1, 256 \end{bmatrix} \times 3$
conv3_x	28×28	$\begin{bmatrix} 3\times 3, 128 \\ 3\times 3, 128 \end{bmatrix} \times 2$	$\begin{bmatrix} 3\times 3, 128 \\ 3\times 3, 128 \end{bmatrix} \times 4$	$\begin{bmatrix} 1\times 1, 128 \\ 3\times 3, 128 \\ 1\times 1, 512 \end{bmatrix} \times 4$	$\begin{bmatrix} 1\times 1, 128 \\ 3\times 3, 128 \\ 1\times 1, 512 \end{bmatrix} \times 4$	$\begin{bmatrix} 1\times 1, 128 \\ 3\times 3, 128 \\ 1\times 1, 512 \end{bmatrix} \times 8$
conv4_x	14×14	$\begin{bmatrix} 3\times 3, 256 \\ 3\times 3, 256 \end{bmatrix} \times 2$	$\begin{bmatrix} 3\times 3, 256 \\ 3\times 3, 256 \end{bmatrix} \times 6$	$\begin{bmatrix} 1\times 1, 256 \\ 3\times 3, 256 \\ 1\times 1, 1024 \end{bmatrix} \times 6$	$\begin{bmatrix} 1\times 1, 256 \\ 3\times 3, 256 \\ 1\times 1, 1024 \end{bmatrix} \times 23$	$\begin{bmatrix} 1\times 1, 256 \\ 3\times 3, 256 \\ 1\times 1, 1024 \end{bmatrix} \times 36$
conv5_x	7×7	$\begin{bmatrix} 3\times 3, 512 \\ 3\times 3, 512 \end{bmatrix} \times 2$	$\begin{bmatrix} 3\times 3, 512 \\ 3\times 3, 512 \end{bmatrix} \times 3$	$\begin{bmatrix} 1\times 1, 512 \\ 3\times 3, 512 \\ 1\times 1, 2048 \end{bmatrix} \times 3$	$\begin{bmatrix} 1\times 1, 512 \\ 3\times 3, 512 \\ 1\times 1, 2048 \end{bmatrix} \times 3$	$\begin{bmatrix} 1\times 1, 512 \\ 3\times 3, 512 \\ 1\times 1, 2048 \end{bmatrix} \times 3$
	1×1	average pool, 1000-d fc, softmax				
FLOPs		$1.8\times 10^9$	$3.6\times 10^9$	$3.8\times 10^9$	$7.6\times 10^9$	$11.3\times 10^9$

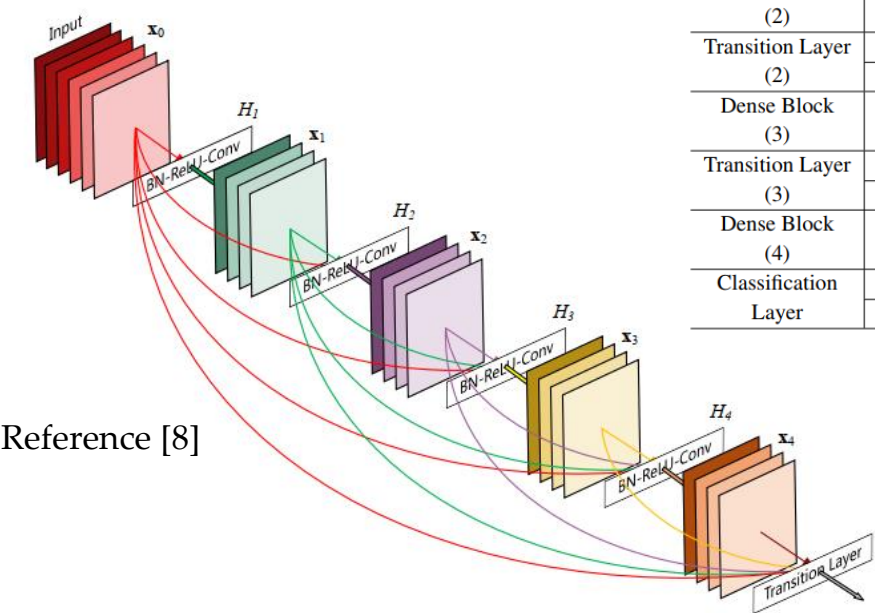
Reference [7]

$\mathcal{H}(\mathbf{x})$  Desired underlying mapping to be fit

$\mathcal{F}(\mathbf{x}) := \mathcal{H}(\mathbf{x}) - \mathbf{x}$  Explicit fitting of a residual mapping

# Methodology: Model Implementation (3)

- CNN Architecture: Densely Connected Convolutional Networks**



Reference [8]

Direct connections from any layer to all subsequent layers!

$$\mathbf{x}_\ell = H_\ell([\mathbf{x}_0, \mathbf{x}_1, \dots, \mathbf{x}_{\ell-1}])$$

Layers	Output Size	DenseNet-121	DenseNet-169	DenseNet-201	DenseNet-264
Convolution	$112 \times 112$		$7 \times 7$ conv, stride 2		
Pooling	$56 \times 56$		$3 \times 3$ max pool, stride 2		
Dense Block (1)	$56 \times 56$	$\begin{bmatrix} 1 \times 1 \text{ conv} \\ 3 \times 3 \text{ conv} \end{bmatrix} \times 6$	$\begin{bmatrix} 1 \times 1 \text{ conv} \\ 3 \times 3 \text{ conv} \end{bmatrix} \times 6$	$\begin{bmatrix} 1 \times 1 \text{ conv} \\ 3 \times 3 \text{ conv} \end{bmatrix} \times 6$	$\begin{bmatrix} 1 \times 1 \text{ conv} \\ 3 \times 3 \text{ conv} \end{bmatrix} \times 6$
Transition Layer (1)	$56 \times 56$		$1 \times 1$ conv		
	$28 \times 28$		$2 \times 2$ average pool, stride 2		
Dense Block (2)	$28 \times 28$	$\begin{bmatrix} 1 \times 1 \text{ conv} \\ 3 \times 3 \text{ conv} \end{bmatrix} \times 12$	$\begin{bmatrix} 1 \times 1 \text{ conv} \\ 3 \times 3 \text{ conv} \end{bmatrix} \times 12$	$\begin{bmatrix} 1 \times 1 \text{ conv} \\ 3 \times 3 \text{ conv} \end{bmatrix} \times 12$	$\begin{bmatrix} 1 \times 1 \text{ conv} \\ 3 \times 3 \text{ conv} \end{bmatrix} \times 12$
Transition Layer (2)	$28 \times 28$		$1 \times 1$ conv		
	$14 \times 14$		$2 \times 2$ average pool, stride 2		
Dense Block (3)	$14 \times 14$	$\begin{bmatrix} 1 \times 1 \text{ conv} \\ 3 \times 3 \text{ conv} \end{bmatrix} \times 24$	$\begin{bmatrix} 1 \times 1 \text{ conv} \\ 3 \times 3 \text{ conv} \end{bmatrix} \times 32$	$\begin{bmatrix} 1 \times 1 \text{ conv} \\ 3 \times 3 \text{ conv} \end{bmatrix} \times 48$	$\begin{bmatrix} 1 \times 1 \text{ conv} \\ 3 \times 3 \text{ conv} \end{bmatrix} \times 64$
Transition Layer (3)	$14 \times 14$		$1 \times 1$ conv		
	$7 \times 7$		$2 \times 2$ average pool, stride 2		
Dense Block (4)	$7 \times 7$	$\begin{bmatrix} 1 \times 1 \text{ conv} \\ 3 \times 3 \text{ conv} \end{bmatrix} \times 16$	$\begin{bmatrix} 1 \times 1 \text{ conv} \\ 3 \times 3 \text{ conv} \end{bmatrix} \times 32$	$\begin{bmatrix} 1 \times 1 \text{ conv} \\ 3 \times 3 \text{ conv} \end{bmatrix} \times 32$	$\begin{bmatrix} 1 \times 1 \text{ conv} \\ 3 \times 3 \text{ conv} \end{bmatrix} \times 48$
Classification Layer	$1 \times 1$		$7 \times 7$ global average pool		
			1000D fully-connected, softmax		

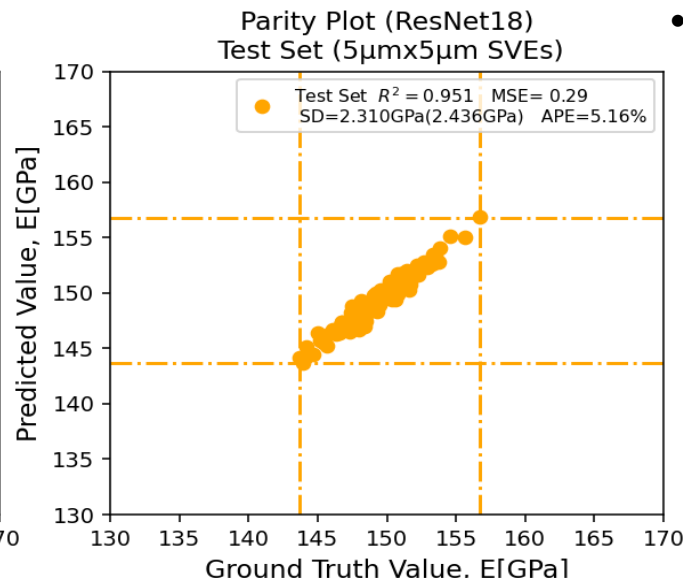
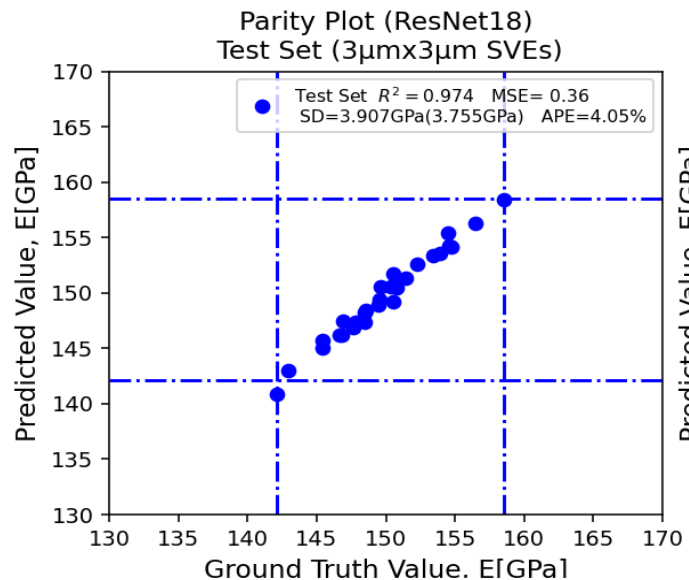
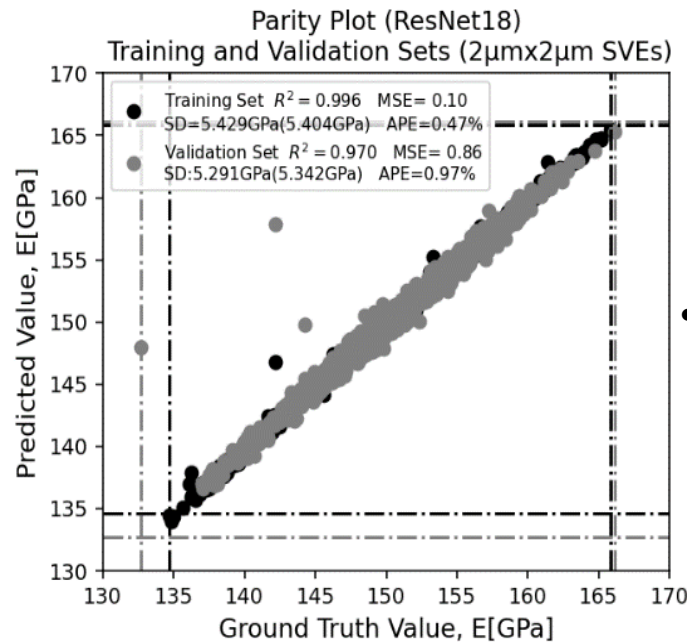
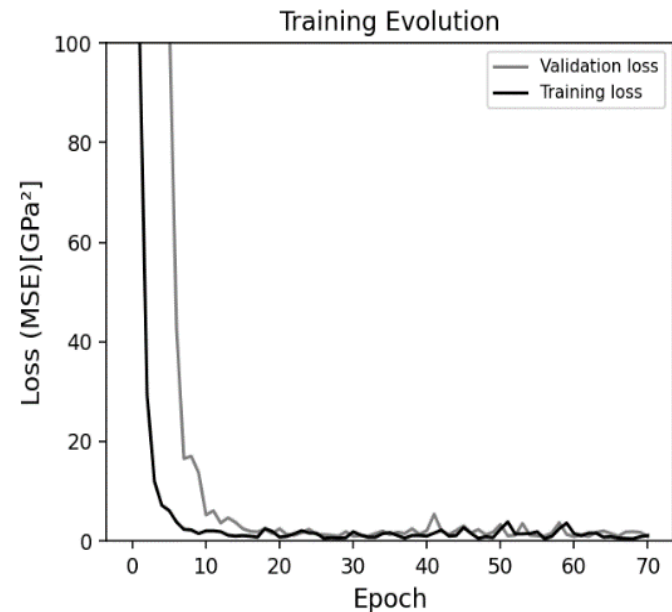
Reference [8]

## Family of DenseNet Architectures

Each layer has access to all the preceding feature-maps, encouraging feature reuse (compactness, redundancy)

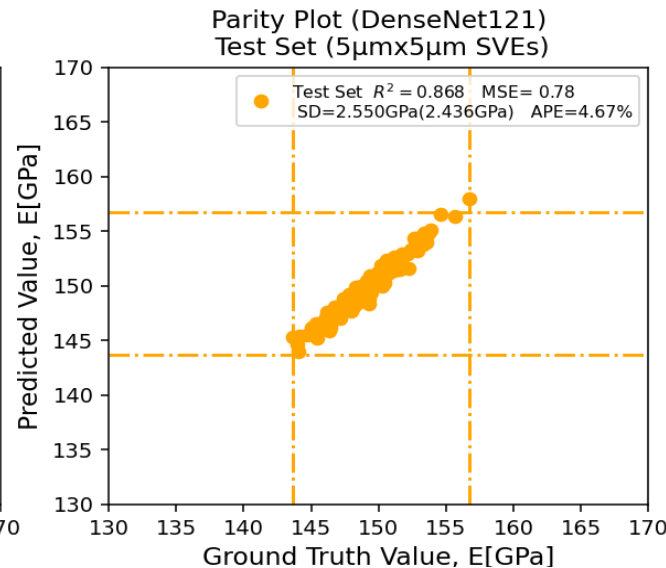
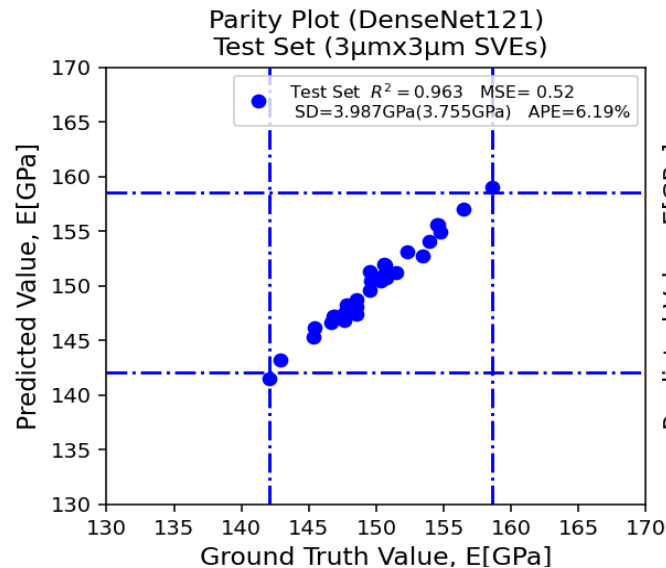
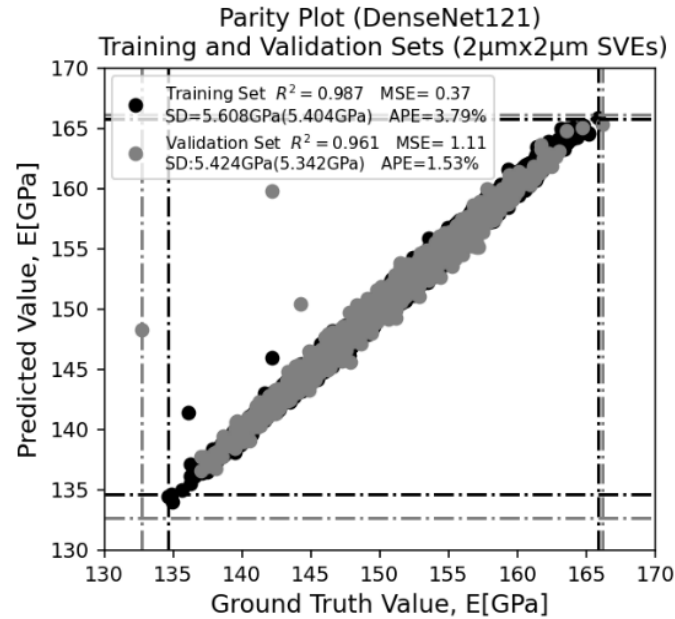
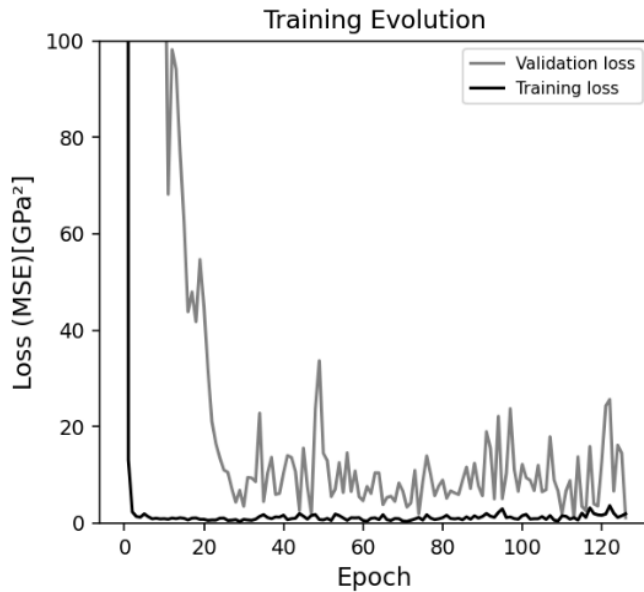
# Results: ResNet-based regression model

- For an ideally trained model, data should map the identity function, with all the dots aligned along the 45° diagonal.
- Network has learnt to emulate intrinsic features of the polysilicon microstructure.
- Consistent microstructure-property mappings: predictions fall within the theoretical limits given by the ground-truth data.





# Results: DenseNet-based regression model



- Again consistent microstructure-property mappings are obtained.
- Although linked to a lower total number of parameters, this model has not displayed significant performance improvements, when compared to the ResNet18-based.

# Conclusions

- The models were able to reconstruct the one-to-one correspondence between microstructural arrangements of a polysilicon aggregate and its *apparent* overall Young's modulus value.
- Statistical characterization of overall Young's modulus was possible also for SVEs featuring different sizes ( $L/\bar{s}_g$  ratios) with respect to the ones employed during the training.
- Although the DenseNet121-based model requires fewer parameters, the computational time was higher than the ResNet18-based model. Moreover, DenseNet121-based model allowed the use of only a fraction of the mini batch size when compared to the ResNet18-based model.
- As far as the generalization capabilities are concerned, in general terms a better performance has been observed adopting the ResNet18-based architecture.

## Prospects for future works:

Improve representativeness of test sets e.g. increase their size.

Improve pixel color encoding: account for the fact that directional variation of the in-plane Young's modulus does not follow a linear relationship with the in-plane lattice orientation.

## Acknowledgements:

JPQM acknowledges the financial support provided by the University of Costa Rica (UCR) for the postgraduate studies abroad.

Partial financial support from MDPI is also gratefully acknowledged.

# Supplementary Materials

- S. Mariani, R. Martini, A. Ghisi, A. Corigliano and M. Beghi, "OVERALL ELASTIC PROPERTIES OF POLYSILICON FILMS: A STATISTICAL INVESTIGATION OF THE EFFECTS OF POLYCRYSTAL MORPHOLOGY," *Journal for Multiscale Computational Engineering*, vol. 9, no. 3, pp. 327-346, 2011
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